

## A COOL PLACE TO STAY COOL AND PROTECTED DURING A HEAT WAVE ARE:

# The COOL ZONE Sites!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 400 Americans die each year due to summer's sweltering heat. Everyone is at risk when temperatures rise above 90 degrees but the elderly, the very young and people under certain medical conditions are most susceptible to heat and heat-related illnesses.

Heat-related illnesses--which include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, sunburn and heat rash--are caused by overexposure to sun or high temperatures. Under normal conditions, the body behaves like a thermostat and maintains a constant temperature. But when the temperature soars too

high, the body becomes unable to control its temperature and the body's temperature system is overloaded. The body is sweating, but the sweat is not evaporating due to humidity. The body is unable to cool down. The body temperature may rise to 106 degrees or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. When the body's temperature soars this high, the body's temperature gets overheated, it destroys the proteins that control the brain and other vital organs. The result: brain damage or even death.

An electric fan can help, but it can't take the place of an air conditioner. If the temperature reaches the 90s, even the best fan may not protect you from heat exhaustion or heat stroke. The best way to stay cool during a heat wave is to stay indoors with the air conditioner. If you don't have an air conditioner, consider taking a trip to one of the Cool Zone sites, where you may find many activities. The Cool Zone sites are a mall, the library, your nearby senior center, or the movie theaters where you will be safe for a couple of hours.

Every summer, the County designates Cool Zone sites all over San Diego, air-conditioned settings where seniors and others can gather. The sites encourage people to share air conditioning during the heat of the day to protect their health, and reduce their individual energy costs. Cool



Heat-related illnesses can cause serious injury and even death if unattended. Signs of heat-related illnesses is starting include nausea, dizziness, flushed or pale skin, heavy sweating and headaches.

The warning signs of heat stroke are: red, hot dry skin; a temperature of 103 degrees or higher; rapid strong pulse; throbbing headache; dizziness; nausea; confusion; and unconsciousness.

Victims of heat-related illness should be moved to a cool place, given cool water to drink and ice packs or cool wet cloths should be applied to the skin. If a victim refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately.

Zones are helping to conserve energy for the whole community and also are great places to meet people and socialize.

The Cool Zone program began in 2001 after an unusually hot summer caused energy blackouts and higher utility costs. Supervisor Dianne Jacob created the idea of having designated Cool Zones where seniors and others could come to share air conditioning to save their own energy, and protect their health from the intense heat.

The Cool Zone program won a national health award from the American Society on Aging. Board of Supervisors. For more information about the Cool Zone sites, call 1-800-510-2020 or visit the network of care at: [www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/aging](http://www.sandiego.networkofcare.org/aging)