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For Immediate Release

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Media relations

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Beat the heat: Be informed and take precautions

SPRINGFIELD, Ore. – With temperatures expected to top 100 degrees in the Willamette Valley early this week, PeaceHealth emergency medical providers urge residents to take the necessary steps to protect themselves and loved ones against possible heat-related illness.

“These kinds of record-high temperatures aren’t something people in the Northwest are used to dealing with on a regular basis,” said Dr. Margaret Pattison, medical director of the emergency department at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. “They often forget to protect themselves or don’t recognize the symptoms when they are experiencing a heat-related illness. It’s so important to be informed and take precautions because conditions such as heat stroke can be life-threatening.”

**Signs of heat exhaustion**include cool, pale or clammy skin; heavy sweating; dizziness, headache, nausea and weakness. A person experiencing these symptoms should move to a cooler place; drink small amounts of water; remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths to the skin. If the person vomits or begins to lose consciousness, call 911.

**Signs of heat stroke**include headache; hot, red skin; rapid breathing; racing pulse; vomiting; changes in consciousness; and lack of sweating, despite heat. Call 911 immediately if someone shows signs of heat stroke. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person’s body by immersing them up to their neck in a tub of cool water, spraying them with cold water, or covering the person with cold, wet cloths.

To prevent heat-related illnesses, in alignment with the American Red Cross, PeaceHealth recommends the following safety tips:

* Hot cars can be deadly and children or pets should never be left in a vehicle. The inside temperature of the car can quickly reach 120 degrees.
* Stay hydrated throughout the day by drinking plenty of fluids. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol. However, don't drink large amounts of plain water all at once—this can lead to water-toxicity.
* Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat. Those most at risk include older adults 65+, children 4 and younger, outdoor workers and people with certain chronic illnesses or disabilities.
* Those who don’t have air conditioning, should seek relief from the heat during the warmest part of the day in places like libraries, theaters, shopping malls, etc.
* Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun’s rays.
* Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day, usually 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
* Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat. Take frequent breaks if working outdoors.
* Check on animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat. Provide them with plenty of cool water.

**For more information about heat-related illnesses, visit** [**peacehealth.org/medical-topics/id/htske**](http://www.peacehealth.org/medical-topics/id/htske)**.**

**About PeaceHealth:** PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 900 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org).

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