



MaryEllen Odell  
*County Executive*

**Department of Health**  
1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509  
(845) 808-1390



Michael J. Nesheiwat, M.D.  
*Interim Commissioner of Health*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact: Barbara Ilardi, Public Information Officer, (845) 808-1390**

### **Preventing Heat-Related Illness**

**Brewster, NY-** When the temperatures soar this summer, stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay informed. Anyone at any time, even those who are physically fit, can suffer heat-related illness in extreme temperatures.

“Residents should be careful and take precautions during a hot spell lasting a few days. Watch out for your family, friends and neighbors too. Infants, young children and the elderly especially can have problems in hot weather,” states MaryEllen Odell.

“Heat or sun stroke is the most dangerous type of heat-related illness and causes several hundred deaths in the United States each year,” says Michael Nesheiwat, M.D., Interim Commissioner of Health. “Heat stroke occurs when a person’s body temperature goes over 104 degrees Fahrenheit. If you think someone has heat stroke, call 911.”

Another heat-related problem is heat exhaustion. Signs of this include cold, pale, clammy skin, dizziness, fainting, nausea, muscle cramps or headache. “If someone faints and passes out, call 911 immediately and move the person to a cooler location—out of the sun or into air-conditioning. Apply cool water with a cloth to the back of their neck or forehead. Give sips of water every 15 minutes for one hour,” Dr. Nesheiwat advises.

Heat cramps or painful spasms in the legs and abdomen can also occur, but are less severe. If a person is on a low-sodium diet or has heart problems, seek medical attention right away. Otherwise, drink sips of water every 15 minutes for one hour. If cramps don’t go away, seek medical care.

To ensure a safe summer, take these steps to stay cool in hot weather:

- Drink plenty of fluid. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. Water is best because it replenishes your body's natural fluids. Avoid alcohol and very sugary drinks, which dehydrate the body.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella. Use a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher as sunburn affects your body's ability to cool down.
- Avoid hot and heavy meals –they add heat to your body.
- Try to schedule outdoor activity in the early morning and evening hours when it is coolest.
- Stay indoors in a cool or air-conditioned place.
- Never leave a person or pet in a parked vehicle, even if the windows are cracked open and you only expect it to be a short period of time.

During extreme heat events, cooling centers are open for Putnam residents as well. For a list of local cooling shelters and phone numbers to call to check hours of operation, visit the NYS Department of Health website at <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/weather/cooling/>. For more information on heat-related illness during prolonged periods of extreme temperatures, call the Putnam County Department of Health at (845) 808-1390.

The Department of Health's mission is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit the PCDOH website at [www.putnamcountyny.com/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health) or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](https://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth), and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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