

# Hospital Readout

## The Health Risks of a Heat Wave

Some people long for summer's warm weather, but stretches of heat and humidity can cause cardiac and respiratory problems for many people.

"Elderly persons and the very young are most vulnerable to heat-related conditions," states Dr. Brooks Mirrer, Cardiologist at **Ellenville Regional Hospital**. "Obese people, and those with certain medical conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, are also very susceptible. It does not take a lot of extra heat to affect this vulnerable population. The body circulates blood to the skin and perspiration removes the heat from the skin. In extreme heat, the heart has to pump faster and harder, leading to heart attacks and strokes. Even a healthy person who overexerts in the heat can die of heat stroke," he added.

Heat disorders come in many varieties. The most common include heat exhaustion, whose symptoms include thirst, headache, dizziness, and nausea. Heat or sunstroke have similar symptoms to heat exhaustion, as well as cessation of sweating, difficulty walking, disorientation, and fainting. Heat exhaustion is not fatal, but heat stroke can be. Sunburn and heat cramps can also occur due to overexposure to the sun.

These serious health conditions are preventable. **Ellenville Regional Hospital** recommends the following steps to help to avoid heat-related illness:

- Reschedule strenuous activity for cooler parts of the day;
- Wear light-colored and loose-fitting clothing;
- Drink plenty of fluids, even if you are not thirsty;
- Avoid alcoholic beverages; they can cause dehydration;
- Do not use salt tablets;
- Avoid direct sun exposure; take advantage of the shade;
- Stay in air-conditioned environments as much as possible.

If you are experiencing symptoms of heat-related illnesses, get out of the sun as soon as possible and drink water or a sports beverage. If your symptoms still persist for 30 minutes, seek immediate medical advice.

For information on **Ellenville Regional Hospital's** services, please call 647-6400. 

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## Birchall's Service Acknowledged

Patricia Birchall, left, recent retiree of **Ellenville Regional Hospital**, and Steven Kelley, **ERH** CEO. Mr. Kelley is presenting a plaque to Ms. Birchall on her retirement after 30+ years of service to **Ellenville Regional Hospital** and the Ellenville Community. 

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