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[00:00:37] **Speaker 1** As to weather conditions, extreme heat is a definite hazard to vulnerable populations, including now here in Wisconsin. Across the southern part of the state this week, heat advisories went out with feels like temperatures topping 100 degrees. Add to that air quality alerts and it's not only miserable, it can be dangerous. We turn to Margaret Thelen, the climate and health program manager in the DHS Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health. And thanks very much for being here.

[00:01:06] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:01:07] **Speaker 1** So with heat indices over 100 degrees in southern Wisconsin, as we've said, how really dangerous can this be?

[00:01:13] **Speaker 2** It's very dangerous. And it's just becoming more and more common with climate change right now. And it's dangerous to everybody. The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change impacts projected that even some areas of the state are going to experience almost a month, more of 90 degree days by mid-century. So by 2050.

[00:01:31] **Speaker 1** And so how at risk are people who have to work outdoors or vulnerable populations like the unhoused elderly or people with disabilities?

[00:01:40] **Speaker 2** Yeah, it's important to remember that extreme heat can impact anybody. But like you said of those, the unhoused population, older adults, young children, they are more likely to experience those kind of symptoms. For outdoor workers, it's really important that those supervisors and employers review their policies and procedures on acclimatization or put in different or letting the workers work at different priorities or find more water and shade during those times.

[00:02:12] **Speaker 1** Is that happening to your knowledge?

[00:02:14] **Speaker 2** It does. There are there is OSHA policies that a lot of employers use to be able to help their employer.

[00:02:21] **Speaker 1** But how real are the dangers of first heat exhaustion and then heat stroke?

[00:02:26] **Speaker 2** Oh, they're very real. Heat related illnesses range from heat rash, which which the splotchy red and the itching to heat heat cramps to heat exhaustion. And finally, heatstroke. Heatstroke can really happen within minutes. And it's really important that you recognize those signs and symptoms in your friends, your family, those around you, and even in yourself.

[00:02:48] **Speaker 1** How do you know if you're really in trouble with those things?

[00:02:51] **Speaker 2** Yeah. So with heatstroke and heat exhaustion, you become really dizzy. You become confused. You start rapidly breathing. It really turns dangerous when your internal body temperature is above 104 degrees. And when that happens, you need to be able to immediately find shade or find a cool area, be able to drink water. I know when I get really warm after a run, I like to put a bag of ice on the back of my neck because that just cools you down immediately.

[00:03:20] **Speaker 1** Is it safe to be even indoors without air conditioning right now?

[00:03:24] **Speaker 2** There's a lot of different factors that go into cooling a house. The cooler areas where there's less direct sunlight like basements or cellars are generally cooler. You can you can be in there. But when we're reaching these high temperatures and a lot of people will put fans on and if they don't have air conditioning, fans actually aren't recommended when it's above 90 degrees, 95, 95 degrees, because it doesn't allow your body to cool, it will actually heat your body up with that air movement.

[00:03:54] **Speaker 1** So with all of that said, are there enough of these kind of public cooling centers available.

[00:04:00] **Speaker 2** So each of the local, local municipalities will identify those public areas where people can go. Often they'll work with 211 so that people have a single spot to call to be able to find your transportation or find those locations. So think libraries, churches, community centers, those areas are usually available.

[00:04:21] **Speaker 1** We know that the Biden administration has just announced a new hazard alert system and stepped up inspections and enforcement of high risk industries like construction. What kind of changing responses do public agencies like yours or DHS have considering this kind of extreme heat?

[00:04:38] **Speaker 2** Yes, I work for the Climate and health program and we like to work a lot with other state agencies and federal agencies like the National Weather Service to be able to communicate and prepare for extreme heat. So finding ways to reach those populations that are needed. We also work a lot with local health departments, local emergency management to provide data and best practices as they implement these extreme heat related response plans that they have so that people can find the cooling centers, they can meet those unmet needs faster.

[00:05:13] **Speaker 1** Because presumably we can count on more of this going forward.

[00:05:18] **Speaker 2** Yeah, with with climate change, Wisconsin is becoming warmer and wetter and we want to be able to empower our local decision makers, our local public officials with that data and knowledge to be able to respond quickly to these type of events.

[00:05:32] **Speaker 1** All right, Margaret Fallin, thanks very much.

[00:05:34] **Speaker 2** Thank you.

[00:05:39] **Speaker 1** You didn't need your notes.

[00:05:42] **Speaker 2** Thank you. I really appreciate this. This is the.