



## JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Health Officials Warn Residents to Be Careful of Heat-Related Illnesses While Cleaning Up Storm Debris**

Baton Rouge, La. - Many Louisiana residents will spend this weekend outdoors, cleaning up debris from Hurricane Isaac, and the Department of Health and Hospitals reminds them to take precautions against heat stroke.

“Now that the storm has passed, many people are anxious to clean up around their properties and tend to their homes,” said DHH Secretary Bruce D. Greenstein. “We want them to be aware that, with weather like we are having now, when you stay outdoors for extended periods of time, doing physical work, you are at risk for heat stroke. This will be an even bigger concern for people who are still lacking power and have no air conditioning to cool off when they come indoors. Don’t make yourself sick – drink lots of water, dress appropriately and take frequent breaks.”

Also called sunstroke or heat illness, heat stroke is a serious condition that can be life threatening. If you are heading outdoors to do cleanup work, you can lower your risk of heat stroke by wearing light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and a hat, drinking water regularly and stopping periodically to rest in a shaded area. It is also a good precaution to wear an effective-level sunblock or sunscreen lotion to prevent your skin from being sunburned. Before you begin working outside, drink plenty of water, even if you don’t feel thirsty.

People who are experiencing heat stroke will suddenly stop sweating as much, and will have a headache, rapid pulse and skin that is red and feels hot to the touch.

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If you experience these symptoms, go indoors or to a shaded area immediately, remove outer layers of clothing, drink water taking small sips and apply cool water or ice packs to your skin to lower your body temperature (heat stroke occurs when your body temperature reaches 105 degrees). Then, you need to seek immediate medical attention.

For more information on heat stroke and heat-related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control facts at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/>.

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