



PIMA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

3950 S. COUNTRY CLUB, Ste. 100 • TUCSON, AZ 85714

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:
Patti Woodcock
520.243.7701
520.940.0194

TIPS FOR STAYING COOL

When the Electrical Power Goes Off

Tucson, Az – Thursday, July 9, 2009 – As a result of last night’s monsoon storm, the Pima County Health Department is offering tips on how to stay cool when electrical power is lost for a prolonged period of time.

“One of the most important things to remember is to stay hydrated,” says Dr. Michelle McDonald, Chief Medical Officer for the Pima County Health Department. “Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink while the weather is hot.”

Other suggestions include:

- Don’t drink liquids that contain alcohol or large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area.
- Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:
 - Infants and young children
 - People aged 65 or older
 - People who have a mental illness
 - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure

-More-



- Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.

Food safety also becomes a concern when the electricity is off for a prolonged period. During a power outage, the refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it remains unopened. A full stand-alone freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed. The freezing compartment in a refrigerator-freezer may not keep foods frozen as long. If the freezer is not full, quickly group packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively.

Always keep meat, poultry, fish, and eggs refrigerated at or below 40 °F and frozen food at or below 0 °F which may be difficult when the power is out. Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.

Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40 °F or below. You will have to evaluate each item separately. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine the safety. Remember you can't rely on appearance or odor. Never taste food to determine its safety! Be sure to discard any items in either the freezer or the refrigerator that have come into contact with raw meat juices. Partial thawing and refreezing may reduce the quality of some food, but the food will remain safe to eat.

The Green Valley Recreation's West Social Center at 1111 Via Arcoiris, 625-3440, near the intersection of Continental Road and La Canada is open to anyone whose home is affected by today's outage. Today is movie day, and the Center is going to open up early to provide Green Valley residents with a nice cool place to spend the day until the power is back on.

For information regarding food safety, please call the Pima County Health Department at 243.7908 or log onto www.pimahealth.org, consumer health and food safety link, and click on food safety information gateway at the bottom of the page.

###

