

**Jefferson County****Public Health**
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Central Oregon Public Health Monthly Update

June 27, 2025

The Central Oregon Public Health Newsletter is now available in Spanish!

To receive it in your mailbox click [here](#).

Usted puede encontrar el boletín de este mes en español [aquí](#)

Discover practical health tips in this month's Public Health Newsletter, which features a collection of articles designed to inform and protect our community. Learn how to stay safe during the extreme summer weather, dive into water safety, and examine the pressing global health issue of hepatitis. Together, these articles provide valuable knowledge to enhance public health and safety throughout the summer season.

Staying Safe During Summer Heat and Smoke



As we get into the swing of summer in Central Oregon, risks of extreme heat, wildfires and wildfire smoke come to mind. These summer hazards can lead to cancelled plans, but they also threaten health and safety. Be proactive to stay safe and informed all summer long.

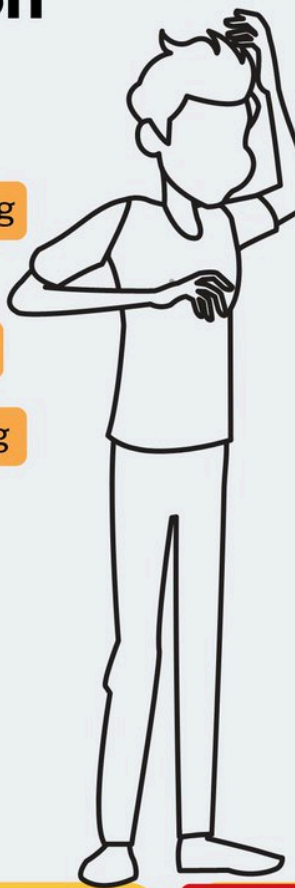
Extreme Heat

Hot temperatures can lead to heat-related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can be especially dangerous for older adults, children, people with chronic conditions, and people taking certain medications. Spot the differences between heat exhaustion and heat stroke below.

Heat Exhaustion


- Faint or dizzy
- Excessive sweating
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Cool, pale, clammy skin
- Muscle cramps

vs.




Heat Stroke

- Throbbing headache
- Confused, may lose consciousness
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Body temperature above 103°
- Red, hot skin




Help the person get to a cooler, air conditioned place. Encourage them to drink water if they're fully conscious.



Call 911.

Cool off the person quickly by laying them in cool water or dousing them with it.

For more information, visit
healthoregon.org/preparedness



Some tips for protecting yourself from extreme heat:

- **Hydrate regularly:** Drink more water than usual and do not wait until you're thirsty. Avoid alcohol and sugary drinks, or make sure you alternate these drinks with water.
- **Plan outdoor activities:** Consider strenuous activities during cooler parts of the day (early mornings and evenings). Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing, and don't forget a hat and sunscreen!
- **Never leave children or pets in vehicles:** Temperatures inside cars can rise quickly and can cause overheating.

- **Utilize air-conditioned spaces:** If you do not have air conditioning, keep windows and blinds closed during the day. Consider using designated cooling centers, visit a friend or relative with AC or consider other cooled public spaces like grocery stores for relief from the heat.
- **Find designated cooling centers locally:**
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)
 - Call 211 or go to 211info.org

Wildfires and Wildfire Smoke



Image Source: Oregon Public Broadcasting

As the summer marches on, dry conditions can increase wildfire risk across Central Oregon. Whether it is closed campgrounds, evacuations, or wildfire smoke, it is important to be aware of wildfires and take actions to protect your health. Even if a wildfire is not close, wildfire smoke can still travel and impact us locally. Wildfire smoke contains particulate matter (PM2.5) that can be inhaled and travel deep into your lungs, causing irritation and worsening respiratory and cardiovascular conditions. Some ways to stay safe from wildfires and wildfire smoke are:

- **Create defensible space outside your home:** Maintain a buffer zone of at least 30 feet from your home free of vegetation and debris.
- **Be aware of fire safety:** With warm and dry conditions, burning is already restricted or prohibited on many lands in Central Oregon. In 2024, our state experienced a record-breaking wildfire season, with 1.9 million acres burned. Eighty percent of those fires were started by

human activity! We can do better. Check for restrictions on campfires, use of fireworks, or other equipment when spending time outdoors. Always be sure to extinguish fires completely by making sure ashes are cool to the touch.

- Stay aware of wildfires by downloading the Watch Duty app, which provides information and tools for firefighters and the public. You can view active fire perimeters, power outages, road closures, evacuation orders and more. Watch Duty - [Maps and Alerts](#)
- **Stay indoors during poor air quality:** Keep windows and doors closed. If you have air conditioning, set it to recirculate air to prevent smoke infiltration.
- **Create a cleaner air space:** Use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters in your home. Consider creating a [DIY box fan filter](#) at home!
- **Monitor air quality:** Consider limiting outdoor activity when air quality is poor (101+). Review the air quality index (AQI) below for reference. If you must be outdoors in poor air quality, consider using an N95 mask to limit smoke impacts.

Daily AQI Color	Levels of Concern	Values of Index	Description of Air Quality
Green	Good	0 to 50	Air quality is satisfactory, and air pollution poses little or no risk.
Yellow	Moderate	51 to 100	Air quality is acceptable. However, there may be a risk for some people, particularly those who are unusually sensitive to air pollution.
Orange	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101 to 150	Members of sensitive groups may experience health effects. The general public is less likely to be affected.
Red	Unhealthy	151 to 200	Some members of the general public may experience health effects; members of sensitive groups may experience more serious health effects.
Purple	Very Unhealthy	201 to 300	Health alert: The risk of health effects is increased for everyone.
Maroon	Hazardous	301 and higher	Health warning of emergency conditions: everyone is more likely to be affected.

Stay Informed and Be Prepared:

- Sign up for Emergency Alerts
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)
- Prepare an [Emergency Kit](#)
- Develop an [Evacuation Plan](#)
- Be aware of [local wildfire information](#)
- Check [Air Quality Index](#) Information

By taking these precautions, you can better protect yourself and others from extreme heat, wildfires and wildfire smoke this summer.

Beat the Heat Safely This Summer: Drowning Prevention Tips from Bend Fire &

Rescue



Image Source: Bend Fire and Rescue

Whether you are floating the river, playing in a pool, or enjoying one of our local water parks – Bend Fire & Rescue wants to remind you that while water can be fun and refreshing during high summertime temps – it can also be dangerous. Our bodies of water can stay cold through most of the summer due to nearby snowmelt. While cooling off in the river or lake can be appealing, sudden immersion in **cold water** can lead to cold shock, weakness and hypothermia.

Here are some tips on how to stay safe around water for people of any age:

1. **Take swim lessons.** If you've never been around water before, or if you don't know how to swim, take a lesson! Kids and adults can feel more confident and stay safer in the water by learning how to swim.
2. **Never go swimming alone.** Accidents can happen to even the strongest swimmers! Whether you are fishing, floating or swimming – make sure someone knows and can watch to be sure you are safe for the duration of your time in the water.
3. **Wear a brightly colored swimsuit.** Bright colored fabrics stand out and make swimmers easier to spot in and out of the water. Being visible will help bystanders and responders in the event of an emergency.
4. **Wear a life jacket.** If you are on a boat or float, near deep water, or aren't a strong swimmer, a life jacket can save your life by keeping your head above the water.

5. **Know CPR.** Learning CPR can help you save someone who has drowned and may be unconscious without a pulse and not breathing. In a drowning emergency, CPR should be started as soon as possible and continued until first responders are on scene and can take over.
6. **Make smart choices.** Never swim if you're under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A Special Note for Parents

Drowning is the number one cause of death for children ages 1 – 4 in the United States ([CDC](#)). The best way to keep kids safe is to teach them about water safety early!

- Talk to children about water safety and why drowning can happen.
- Show them good habits, like always swimming with an adult present and wearing a life jacket.
- If you have a pool, hot tub, or any source of backyard water, make sure it is locked or covered so children cannot get in without an adult present.

Drowning is scary - but it can be prevented. By following safety rules, paying attention, and learning lifesaving skills, we can all help keep our community safe.

If you want to learn more about drowning prevent, or if you'd like to sign-up for a free CPR class, contact Bend Fire & Rescue at **541-322-6300** or visit bendoregon.gov/Fire.

Let's protect each other and enjoy the water safely this summer!

When in Doubt, Stay Out: Harmful Algal Blooms of Central Oregon

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are made of blue-green algae called cyanobacteria. As the algal bloom cells die, Cyanobacteria in the bloom releases a toxin that causes health effects in humans and animals. Algal blooms form in warm, still water with high nutrient concentrations, occurring either naturally from wildlife or from fertilizer runoff. Swallowing and inhaling contaminated water droplets can lead to exposure to these toxins.

Signs of HABs

Two types of cyanobacterial blooms are common; they have different presentations, but both contain cyanotoxins. One to look out for has a foamy, scummy, thick paint-like blue-green, brownish red, or pea green appearance. The other type of HAB is dark green, slimy, and has a smelly odor. Harmful algal blooms can look differently in water depending on the conditions and type. Don't go into water that looks foamy, scummy, thick

like paint, pea-green, blue-green or brownish red. A good rule of thumb for you and your pet is: **When in Doubt, Stay Out!**



How do HABs affect my health?

Exposure to cyanobacteria can lead to symptoms of numbness, difficulty breathing, skin irritation, weakness, nausea, diarrhea, and dizziness. Children and pets are especially vulnerable to algal blooms, so it is important to look for signs of HABs before swimming. When in doubt, stay out! Dogs are extremely susceptible to these toxins and only need a very small dose to get sick. They will exhibit symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting, breathing issues, difficulty standing or walking, within the first hour of exposure. Seek help from a veterinarian as soon as possible if you find your dog exhibiting these symptoms.

Reporting HABs

Oregon Health Authority updates [recreational health advisories](#), but not every water body can be monitored by OHA due to limited resources. To assist in this monitoring program, [report a harmful algal bloom](#). You can also report [human illness](#), or [animal illness](#). When an algal bloom is reported, water sampling will take place to confirm whether it is harmful or not. When confirmed, advisories are issued until water testing reports have reached a safe level.

Treatment and Prevention

It is very important to note that cyanotoxins cannot be treated by boiling water for drinking. Boiling the water can be more problematic because it splits the cyanobacterial cells open to release more toxins into the water. Cyanotoxins also cannot be filtered using traditional campground filtration methods. When consuming fish from affected areas, be sure to remove the skin, fat, and organs before cooking or freezing. These parts are where the cyanotoxins from the algal blooms build up in fish. If you suspect HAB poisoning, contact a healthcare provider or a poison control hotline. The national, toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**, automatically connects you to your local poison center and is your resource for help in a poisoning emergency. A trained healthcare provider is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The call is free and confidential. **Oregon Poison Center | OHSU**

Treating HABs in the environment is difficult and has proven to be harmful in the past, leaving prevention as the best option. The best methods to prevent harmful algal blooms include effective management of nutrients. This involves mitigating fertilizer runoff from agricultural use to prevent excess plant nutrients for algae to feed on.

Hepatitis Can't Wait

World Hepatitis Day, observed each year on July 28, is an important opportunity to raise awareness about viral hepatitis, a preventable and treatable disease that affects over 350 million people worldwide. This year's theme, *"Hepatitis Can't Wait,"* emphasizes the urgency of testing, diagnosis, and treatment to prevent serious health outcomes such as liver cancer and death. Despite the availability of effective vaccines and treatments, hepatitis remains a silent epidemic due to low awareness and testing rates.

Public health agencies play a key role in addressing hepatitis through education, expanded testing, and connecting individuals with care. The CDC recommends that all adults get tested for hepatitis B and C at least once in their lifetime, with regular testing for those at higher risk. In Deschutes County and across Oregon, free or low-cost hepatitis testing is available through local clinics and community health centers. World Hepatitis Day is a reminder that early detection can save lives and that everyone has a part to play in eliminating hepatitis.

Oregon currently ranks amongst the worst in the nation for hepatitis C deaths. People in Oregon are 2.7 times more likely than people who live in other U.S. states to die from hepatitis C- the leading cause of preventable death from reportable disease in Oregon. State officials are emphasizing the need for increased community-based screenings and prevention, and treatment services in the most affected populations.

Dr Paul Cieslak, MD Oregon Health Authority Medical Director, Communicable Diseases and Immunizations shares information on Hepatitis here; [video](#)



Photo from World Hepatitis Day 2025 Campaign



In this episode of **Inside Deschutes County**, we dive into the behind-the-scenes world of pool and hotel inspections with longtime Environmental Health Specialist John Mason. From checking chlorine levels to tracking down bed bugs, John shares what it takes to keep public pools safe and what might cause a facility to fall short of health standards. Whether you're a frequent hotel guest or just curious about what inspectors really look for, this episode offers a revealing look at the work that protects public health.

See Us in the News



Check out the Source's coverage of Public Health Advisory Board celebrating our local **Health Heroes Awards**!

Do you have feedback for us? Is there a public health topic you haven't seen covered but would like to see in an upcoming newsletter? Or a topic you'd like to see more of? Please take a moment to complete our [quick reader feedback survey](#). We're always looking to improve our newsletter and your input can help highlight future topics!

Health Services hosts numerous classes and special events each month!

For details about these events and any updates please visit our [Health Services Calendar](#).

Public Health Resources:

- Central Oregon public health web resources:
 - [Crook County](#)
 - [Deschutes County](#)
 - [Jefferson County](#)

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