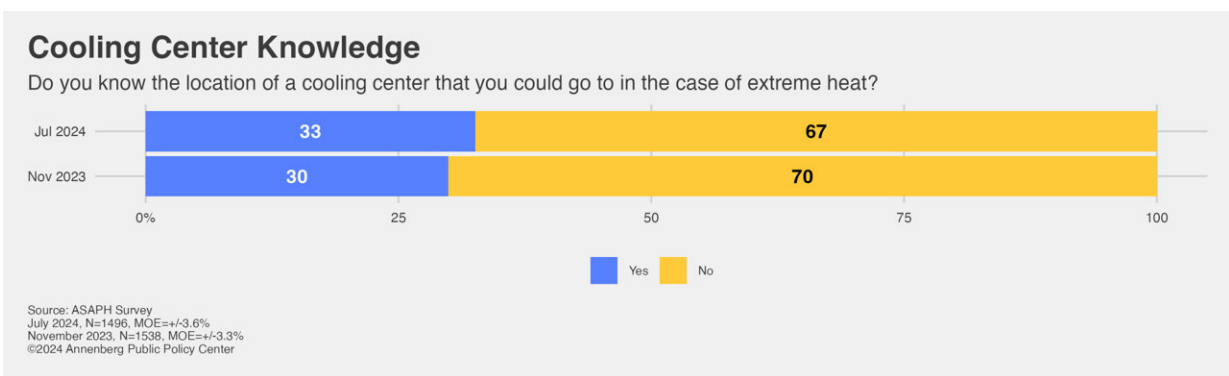


As temperatures break records, many are unaware of symptoms of heat-related illnesses

August 12 2024



Cooling center knowledge. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

With NASA data showing that July 22, 2024, was the [hottest day](#) on record and indications that July may have been the [hottest month](#), an Annenberg Public Policy Center survey conducted in mid-July found that most people know three of the symptoms of a heat-related illness but do not know the location of their nearest cooling center.

At the same time, increasing numbers of people think that heat waves are becoming more frequent and intense and affecting their [daily activities](#).

Knowledge of cooling centers in the case of extreme heat

Although the locations of cooling centers, or indoor air-conditioned facilities such as libraries, community and senior centers, schools are publicized by [city governments](#) on hot days, many of those surveyed report being unaware of where to find one.

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) say they do not know the location of a cooling center to which they could go to in case of [extreme heat](#), a number statistically unchanged from last November. "Communities must do a better job of making the public, especially the most vulnerable, aware of these centers," said Ken Winneg, managing director of survey research at APPC.

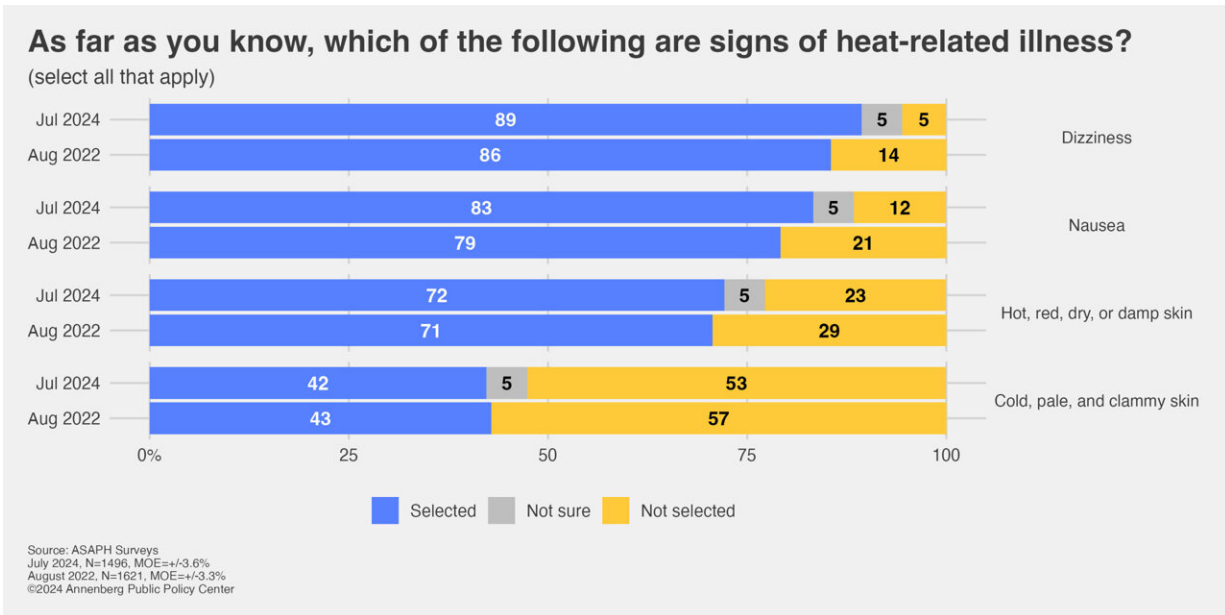
More see link between extreme heat and climate change

When compared with an APPC survey in November 2023, significantly more people now say that [climate change](#) is increasing the risk of heat-related illnesses, respiratory diseases, and insect-borne diseases. Two-thirds (67%) hold this view vs. just under six in 10 (58%) in November 2023.

More people indicate that heat waves in the United States are becoming more frequent and intense than in the past. About two-thirds (65%) believe heat waves are becoming more frequent and intense. Some 58% felt this way in November 2023, when we last asked the question. About a quarter (24%) believe heat waves are about as frequent and intense as they have always been, statistically unchanged from our earlier survey.

At the same time, the proportion of people who say extreme heat has

often or frequently affected their typical daily activities in the past year has increased significantly. Some 43% say extreme outdoor heat has often (22%) or frequently (21%) affected their daily activities, an 8-point increase compared with November 2023 (35% in total said either "often" or "frequently").



Symptoms of heat-related illnesses. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center

Signs of heat-related illnesses

Notably, most people also know three of the telltale signs of heat-related illnesses:

- Dizziness (89% compared to 86% in August 2022)
- Nausea (83% compared to 79% in August 2022)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin (72%, statistically unchanged from

August 2022)

- Cold, pale, and clammy skin (42%, statistically unchanged from August 2022).

Public understands some extreme heat risks better than others

Thinking about the next 10 years, just under six in 10 (58%) think that people in their community will be more likely to experience [heat stroke](#) caused by extreme heat waves. This is significantly higher than in November 2023 when just over half (52%) said they thought people in their community would be more likely to experience heat stroke caused by extreme [heat waves](#) in the next 10 years.

However, only three in 10 (30%) know that a pregnant person in the U.S. who is exposed to extreme heat is more likely to deliver their baby early than a pregnant person who is not exposed to extreme heat. About a quarter (23%) incorrectly say that a pregnant person in the U.S. is either less or just as likely to deliver a baby early; 47% are unsure which is correct.

Two-thirds (67%) know that [heat-related deaths](#) are most common among [older adults](#), aged 65 or older, slightly but significantly higher than in August 2022 (62%).

Nearly all (92%) know that drinking water is better to prevent heat-related illnesses than drinking [sugary drinks](#).

Provided by Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

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