

Pacific Northwest | extreme heat

A chilling cure: Facing killer heat, ERs use body bags to save lives

BY JONEL ALECCIA
Kaiser Health News

As a deadly heat wave scorched the Pacific Northwest in June, overwhelming hospital emergency rooms in a region unaccustomed to triple-digit temperatures, doctors resorted to a grim but practical tool to save lives: human body bags filled with ice and water.

Officials at hospitals in Seattle and Renton, Washington, said that as more people arrived experiencing potentially fatal heatstroke, and with cooling catheters and even ice packs in short supply, they used the novel treatment to quickly immerse and cool several elderly people.

Zippering heatstroke patients into ice-filled body bags worked so well it could become a go-to treatment in a world increasingly altered by climate change, said Dr. Alex St. John, an emergency physician at UW Medicine's Harborview Medical Center.

"I have a feeling that we're looking at many more days of extreme heat in the future, and this is likely to become more common," he said.

Despite the macabre connotation of body bags, using them is a cheap, convenient and scalable way to treat patients in mass casualty emergencies caused by excessive heat, said Dr. Grant Lipman, a Stanford University professor of emergency medicine. He co-authored a pioneering case study documenting the use for heatstroke of what doctors call "human remains pouches."

"When people are this sick, you've got to cool them down fast," Lipman said.

Heatstroke is the most dangerous type of heat illness, a medical emergency that leads to death in up to a third of

Volunteers focus on getting water to vulnerable

PORTLAND — Volunteers handed out water to homeless people in Portland on Thursday as the Pacific Northwest entered the peak days of a scorching heat wave in the usually temperate region.

Authorities trying to provide relief to vulnerable people are mindful of a record-shattering heat wave in late June that killed hundreds in Oregon, Washington and British Columbia.

In Portland, temperatures on Wednesday reached 102 degrees Fahrenheit — tying a record set for the day in 1977. It's supposed to get even hotter Thursday and Friday. In Seattle, highs were predicted to reach the upper 90s in a region where many don't have air conditioning.

In Portland, a homeless advocacy group was using three large vans to transport water and other cooling items to homeless encampments on the outskirts of the city. The effort was important, advocates said, because people experiencing homelessness are often reluctant to go to cooling centers.

Meanwhile, 17-year-old Luna Abadia was out training for cross country with her team from Lincoln High School in downtown Portland. The group stopped to refresh themselves in a large public fountain as temperatures hit the 80s by 9 a.m.

The runners normally train at 4 p.m. but in recent weeks, have had to shift it to 8 a.m. because of the heat, she said.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has declared a state of emergency and activated an emergency operations center, citing the potential for disruptions to the power grid and transportation. Besides opening cooling centers, city and county governments are extending public library hours and waiving bus fare for those headed to cooling centers. A 24-hour statewide help line will direct callers to the nearest cooling shelter and offer safety tips.

—Associated Press

tion. At least 112 deaths in Washington and 115 deaths in Oregon have been linked to the heat wave, state officials said.

The treatment involves filling a body bag with a slurry of water and ice, putting the patient inside and zipping the bag just up to the armpits to allow access for medical equipment and close monitoring. The self-contained bag keeps the ice and water close to the patient's skin.

As the effects of climate change lead to hotter temperatures in more places — including historically temperate zones where air conditioning isn't in wide use — using body bags to rapidly treat heat illness is a logical solution, said Lipman, who directs Stanford's Wilderness Medicine Fellowship and runs Global Outdoor Emergency Support, or GOES, which provides medical guidance for outdoor travelers.

"Every hospital has body bags. Every hospital has ice machines," Lipman said.

Immersing patients in cold water has long been the gold standard for treating athletes with heatstroke caused by exertion, Lipman said. It's the most efficient method, because water conducts heat away from the body about 25 times faster than air.

For now, the body bag treatment has been studied mostly in younger, healthier people, and some doctors worry about the effects of cold water on older people and whether the technique might induce shivering that actually raises body temperature. Lipman agrees further study is needed but said his experience has found "the cooling benefits will outweigh any harm of shivering."

TODAY

Today is Friday, Aug. 13, the 225th day of 2021. There are 140 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On **August 13**, 1910, Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, died in London at age 90.

In **1521**, Spanish conqueror Hernando Cortez captured Tenochtitlan, present-day Mexico City, from the Aztecs.

In **1704**, the Battle of Blenheim was fought during the War of the Spanish Succession, resulting in a victory for English-led forces over French and Bavarian soldiers.

In **1846**, the American flag was raised in Los Angeles for the first time.

In **1860**, legendary sharpshooter Annie Oakley was born in Darke County, Ohio.

In **1889**, William Gray of Hartford, Conn., received a patent for a coin-operated telephone.

In **1932**, Adolf Hitler rejected the post of vice chancellor of Germany, saying he was prepared to hold out "for all or nothing."

In **1942**, Walt Disney's animated feature "Bambi" had its U.S. premiere at Radio City Music Hall in New York, five days after its world premiere in London.

In **1961**, East Germany sealed off the border between Berlin's eastern and western sectors before building a wall that would divide the city for the next 28 years.

In **1967**, the crime caper biopic "Bonnie and Clyde," starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, had its U.S. premiere; the movie, directed by Arthur Penn, was considered shocking as well as innovative for its graphic portrayal of violence.

In **2003**, Iraq began pumping crude oil from its northern oil fields for the first time since the start of the war. Libya agreed to set up a \$2.7 billion fund for families of the 270 people killed in the 1988 Pan Am bombing.

In **2004**, TV chef Julia Child died in Montecito, California, two days short of her 92nd birthday.

In **2017**, in a statement, the White House said President Donald Trump "very strongly" condemned individual hate groups; the statement followed criticism of Trump for blaming the previous day's deadly violence at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, on "many sides."

Ten years ago: Seven people were killed when a stage collapsed at the Indiana State Fair during a powerful storm just before a concert was to begin. In the Republican presidential race, Rep. Michele Bachmann won the Iowa straw poll; Texas Gov. Rick Perry officially declared his candidacy. In eastern Pakistan, al-Qaida gunmen kidnapped an American development expert, Warren Weinstein. (Weinstein was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Jan. 2015.)

Five years ago: Violence erupted in Milwaukee following the fatal shooting of Sylville Smith, a 23-year-old Black man, by a Black police officer, Dominique Heaggan-Brown, who was later acquitted of first-degree reckless homicide. Michael Phelps closed out the Rio Olympics with another gold medal, the 23rd of his career. Kenny Baker, who played R2-D2 in the "Star Wars" movies, died in Preston, England, at age 81.

One year ago: Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp said he was dropping a lawsuit against the city of Atlanta over the city's requirement to wear masks in public and other coronavirus restrictions; Kemp had sought to block local governments from requiring that masks be worn. In an interview on Fox Business Network, President Donald Trump acknowledged that he was starving the U.S. Postal Service of money in order to make it harder to process an expected surge of mail-in ballots.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders is 88. Actor Kevin Tighe is 77. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is 75. Opera singer Kathleen Battle is 73. High wire aerialist Philippe Petit is 72. Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby Clarke is 72. Golf Hall of Famer Betsy King is 66. Movie director Paul Greengrass is 66. Actor Danny Bonaduce is 62. TV weatherman Sam Champion is 60. Actor Dawnn Lewis is 60. Actor John Slattery is 59. Actor Debi Mazar is 57. Actor Quinn Cummings is 54. Actor Seana Kofoed is 51. Country singer Andy Griggs is 48. Actor Gregory Fitoussi is 45. Country musician Mike Melancon (Emerson Drive) is 43. Actor Kathryn Fiore is 42. Former White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders is 39. Actor Sebastian Stan is 39. Actor Eme Ikwuakor is 37. Pop-rock singer James Morrison is 37. Actor Lennon Stella is 22.

—Associated Press

MAKE THE GRADE

Local school information parents need to know!

The Central Oregon School Directory

PUBLISHING SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, IN THE BULLETIN

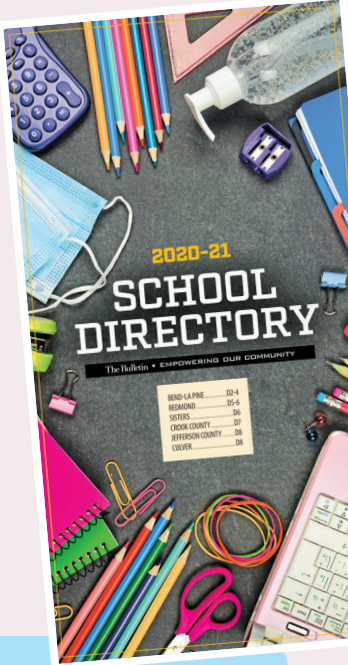
- Handy, easy to use school reference guide and the perfect place to share your business information with area parents.
- One stop reference to all of the schools in Central Oregon.
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