FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute Physician Says Heat Can Affect Heart Health

PENSACOLA, Fla. (Aug. 10, 2022) – With temperatures averaging over 90 degrees throughout northwest Florida this month, the heat is not only uncomfortable, but it can impact the health of those with high blood pressure or heart disease.

Hot weather will cause more blood to flow to the skin in the body's effort to cool itself. That means the heart must beat faster to circulate more blood per minute, which raises blood pressure. Humidity compounds the problem by making the temperature feel even hotter. People who already have high blood pressure can experience unhealthy blood pressure levels that can quickly become an emergency.

"During the summer, the warm weather elevates your body temperature and forces your heart to pump harder and beat faster to reroute the blood to your skin to cool off your body," said José A. Guitian, M.D., FACC, FACP, FSCAI, of Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute. "During the summer season, your heart may circulate up to four times as much blood per minute as it would in the cooler seasons. If your heart is already compromised or weak from a prior heart attack or other conditions, it may not be able to effectively beat faster and stronger, and this can lead to shortness of breath or even congestive heart failure."

Dr. Guitian said the best way to beat the heat and humidity is to stay indoors, preferably in an air-conditioned area. "If you do go out, it's best to go in the early mornings, or evenings when it's not so hot," Dr. Guitian said. "And stay well hydrated with fluid intake, but be sure to check with your doctor or nurse first if you have a history of congestive heart failure."

For more information about heart health, visit ebaptisthealthcare.org/heart.

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About Baptist Health Care
Baptist Health Care is a not-for-profit health care organization based in Northwest Florida that is committed to helping people throughout life's journey. The organization is a proud member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. Baptist continuously strives to be a national leader in quality and service. Baptist Health Care includes three hospitals, four medical parks, Andrews Institute for Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine and a large network of primary care and specialty physicians. Baptist Health Care is one of the largest non-governmental employers in Northwest Florida.