

Heat Wave Response

Quick Guide for Patients and Families

Spot heat illness early

Common symptoms of heat stress:

Feeling unwell

Dizziness

Tiredness

Headache

Easily annoyed

Feeling very thirsty

Sweating

Skin feels very hot

When to take action



>25°C/77°F

Higher-risk groups



>30°C/86°F

Everyone

Higher-risk groups: Older adults (60+), children/youth, pregnant people, and people with chronic conditions

Medical Emergency

Heat stroke signs: Very high body temperature, fast heart rate, altered mental status (confusion, agitation, loss of consciousness), vomiting, seizures



Call 911



Go to a cool place



Remove extra layers



Cool down the skin



Don't leave them alone



People more sensitive to heat

Take extra precautions and check in on people who may be more affected by heat:

- ✓ **Health status & mobility:** Serious mental health conditions; past heat injury; difficulty moving around
- ✓ **Housing & access:** Unhoused; living alone; poor ventilation; no air conditioning; limited access to water/cool spaces
- ✓ **Medications & substances:** Alcohol; stimulant drugs; some medications* can increase heat-risk (antipsychotics, anticholinergics, diuretics, lithium)

*If unsure, ask a pharmacist about your medications



Heat wave action plan: Stay safe



Cool Down

- Close blinds/curtains during the hottest hours
- Open windows when it's cooler outside (evenings)
- Use **air conditioning** or visit a cooler place (library/mall/cooling centre)
- Take cool showers/baths; sleep in the coolest room



Reduce Exposure

- Stay **indoors** during the **hottest hours** and **high humidity (10 a.m.–4 p.m.)**
- Do errands when cooler; avoid intense activity
- Wear light, loose clothing, hat, sunglasses; reapply sunscreen (SPF ≥15+)
- Bring water with you
- Stay in the shade/use an umbrella



Stay Hydrated

- **Drink fluids** often (8–12 glasses/day)*
- Consume water, soups/broth, juicy fruits/veg
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine (can cause dehydration)

*If you limit fluids, ask your care team what's safe during heatwaves



Stay Connected

- **Check in** daily with friends/family
- Look out for people who need extra care
- Monitor heat alerts and follow local guidance
- Talk to a doctor/nurse/pharmacist



Scan Here

More resources