

Extreme Heat Tip Sheet for Individuals

Tips for staying cool and hydrated on hot days

During periods of extreme heat, people can take certain precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses. The most important thing people can do to prevent illnesses from extreme heat is to stay cool and hydrated. The following are basic safety tips people can use during hot days to stay cool and hydrated.

Drinks:

- Stay hydrated—drink plenty of water
- Drink fruit and vegetable juice
- Do not wait until you are thirsty before you drink fluids (except if you are advised to reduce your fluid intake by your doctor)
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Avoid drinking coffee, tea and other caffeinated drinks
- Avoid drinks that are high in sugar
- Avoid hot drinks

Clothing:

- Wear light, loose fitting clothing
- Wear light-colored clothing (avoid dark colors)
- Wear hats and use umbrellas when outdoors
- Wear sunglasses
- Use sunscreen (of at least SPF-sun protection factor 15)

Foods:

- Eat light meals
- Eat fruits and vegetables
- Avoid heavy caloric meals
- Avoid hot meals
- Prepare foods that require little heating/cooking
- Try not to use the oven

Exercise:

- Avoid strenuous exercise
- If you must exercise, pace yourself
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Take breaks at regular intervals in the shade or in an air-conditioned building
- Reschedule times of exercise and sporting activities to mornings or evenings when it may be cooler
- If possible, exercise in air-conditioned places
- Reschedule major school or sporting events to cooler days



When Indoors:

- Stay in cool places
- If you have an air conditioner at home, use it to keep your home cool
- If you must use fans, use them next to open windows
- Switch off electric light bulbs or other heat generating devices
- Keep window blinds and drapes closed to reduce heat and sun from entering your home
- Take frequent cold baths
- Visit air-conditioned places (e.g., malls, libraries) if your home is hot

When outdoors:

- Avoid direct sunlight
- Do not spend long periods of time outdoors, especially between 11 AM- 6 PM
- Stay in shaded areas as much as possible
- Wear appropriate clothing (see clothing section)
- Drink water frequently
- Provide water and frequent breaks for outdoor workers
- Provide cool areas during breaks for outdoor workers
- Use relief workers or assign more staff to do more demanding outdoor work

Tips for Children:

- Dress children appropriately (see clothing section)
- Never leave children and pets alone in parked cars
- Provide children with plenty of drinking water
- Reduce the number of outdoor/sporting activities
- Ensure children take water breaks during exercises
- Monitor children closely
- Ensure children take frequent cold showers/baths as needed to stay cool

Other vulnerable persons:

- Check on the elderly and other vulnerable persons frequently and monitor them for signs or symptoms of heat illnesses
- Encourage friends and relatives to check on vulnerable persons in their family and/or in their neighborhood

Get Information:

- Listen to the local news daily for the weather forecast
- Get health and safety information from your local public health department
- Learn about the symptoms of heat-related illnesses, watch out for these symptoms and carry out preventive measures and first aid

For more information, visit the MDH Extreme Heat website at
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/climatechange/extremeheat.html>
or contact health.climatechange@state.mn.us