

## HEATWAVE PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION AND ADVICE

### Why is a heatwave a problem?

The main risks posed by a heatwave are:

- [dehydration](#) (not having enough water)
- overheating, which can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing
- [heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)

### Who is most at risk?

A heatwave can affect anyone, but the most vulnerable people are:

- older people, especially those over 75
- babies and young children
- people with a serious chronic condition, especially heart or breathing problems
- people with mobility problems – for example, people with Parkinson's disease or who have had a stroke
- people with serious mental health problems
- people on certain medications, for example: diuretics or anti-hypertensive medication, and those that affect sweating and temperature control
- people who misuse alcohol or drugs
- people who are physically active – for example, labourers or those doing sports

### Tips for coping in hot weather

- Shut windows and pull down the shades when it is hotter outside. You can open the windows for ventilation when it is cooler.
- Avoid the heat: stay out of the sun and don't go out between 11am and 3pm (the hottest part of the day) if you're vulnerable to the effects of heat.
- Keep rooms cool by using shades or reflective material outside the windows. If this isn't possible, use light-coloured curtains and keep them closed (metallic blinds and dark curtains can make the room hotter).
- Have cool baths or showers, and splash yourself with cool water.
- Drink cold drinks regularly, such as water and diluted fruit juice. Avoid excess alcohol, caffeine (tea, coffee and cola) or drinks high in sugar.
- Listen to alerts on the radio, TV and social media about keeping cool.
- Plan ahead to make sure you have enough supplies, such as food, water and any medications you need.
- Identify the coolest room in the house so you know where to go to keep cool.
- Wear loose, cool clothing, and a hat and sunglasses if you go outdoors.
- Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be less able to look after themselves.

If you have concerns about an uncomfortably hot house that is affecting your health or someone else's, get medical advice.

You can also get help from the environmental health office at your local authority. They can inspect a home for hazards to health, including excess heat. Visit GOV.UK to [find your local authority](#).