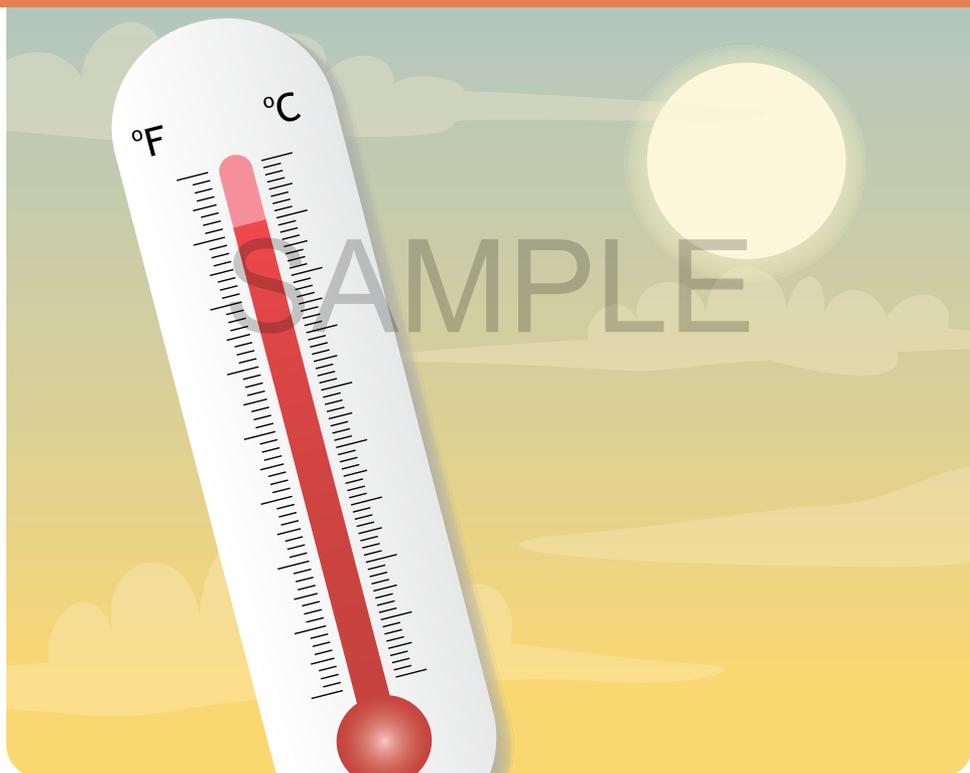


# STAYING SAFE IN THE HEAT

HEALTH TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER





## THE DANGERS OF EXTREME HEAT

Hot weather can pose a health threat to anyone. While human bodies naturally cool themselves as they get warm, including by sweating, high temperatures make that process much harder. That's especially true when the weather is humid and during physical activity, such as sports or working outside. If the body isn't able to cool down, heat can lead to serious illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke, which can be life-threatening. This booklet is full of tips to help keep you and your loved ones safe in the heat.

Keeping an eye on the weather forecast and reading local alerts is a great way to know how to prepare for the heat. Here are a few phrases that will help you understand heat forecasts:

**Heat index** What the temperature feels like to people. It's calculated based on humidity and air temperature and is typically measured in the shade. It's sometimes referred to as the "apparent temperature."

**Wet bulb temperature** A measurement of how heat affects the human body. It takes into account humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover. It's typically used to evaluate the safety of exercise or work in the heat.

**Excessive heat warning** A National Weather Service alert issued 12 hours before "extremely dangerous" and potentially life-threatening heat. The criteria for announcing this vary across the U.S., but they're typically a heat index of 105 degrees for at least two days and the temperature not going below 75 degrees at night. In such heat, people must take action immediately to protect themselves.

**Excessive heat watch** A National Weather Service alert 24 to 72 hours before favorable conditions for an excessive heat event such as a heat wave. This signals it's a good time to get ready for hot weather.

**Heat advisory** A National Weather Service alert put out within 12 hours of "extremely dangerous" heat conditions that are expected to be 100 degrees or higher for at least two days and not below 72 degrees at night. This temperature might be different in a part of the country where dangerous heat isn't common. This heat is life-threatening, and you should take precautions.

**Excessive heat outlooks** Issued by the National Weather Service when excessive heat is possible in the next three to seven days.

**Heat wave** The National Weather Service defines a heat wave as abnormally hot weather lasting two or more days.

Awareness of the risks posed by heat and getting prepared can make hot weather safer. People who do strenuous physical activities outside or in spaces without air conditioning, including workers and athletes, are more vulnerable.

# HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

Heat-related illness, also known as hyperthermia, occurs when body temperature increases past its ability to cool itself. Knowing the symptoms and taking action can save your life or the life of someone else.

The two most serious forms of heat-related illness are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Read on so you'll recognize the symptoms and know what to do if you see them.



## HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion is a serious health condition and should be addressed immediately, as it can lead to heat stroke.

### WHAT TO DO:

- Move to a cool place
- Loosen your clothes
- Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath
- Sip water

### GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You're throwing up
- Your symptoms get worse
- Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour



Dizziness  
Headache



Heavy sweating



Cold, pale, and clammy skin



Fast, weak pulse



Nausea or vomiting



Muscle cramps



Tiredness or weakness



Fainting (passing out)



Headache  
Dizziness  
Confusion  
Disorientation



High body temperature  
(103°F or higher)



Hot, red, and dry or damp skin



Fast, strong pulse



Nausea



Losing consciousness (passing out)

## HEAT STROKE



Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat-related illness. It is life-threatening. Immediately call 911 if you suspect someone is suffering from heat stroke.

### WHAT TO DO:

- Call 911 right away—heat stroke is a medical emergency
- Move the person to a cooler place
- Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath
- Do not give the person anything to drink

### DID YOU KNOW?

You can suffer from heat-related illnesses indoors and away from direct sunlight. It's important to stay vigilant anytime the temperature rises.



## OTHER HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

Heat rash and heat cramps are both heat-related illnesses. While milder than heat exhaustion and heat stroke, they're early warning signs that, if untreated, can progress to a more serious condition.

### HEAT RASH

Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, or groin, or in elbow creases).

#### What to do

- Stay in a cool, dry place
- Keep the rash dry
- Use powder (e.g., baby powder) to soothe the rash

### HEAT CRAMPS

Muscle pain or spasms, typically in the arms, legs, or belly, that occur during exertion in the heat.

#### What to look for

- Heavy sweating during intense exercise
- Muscle pain or spasms

#### What to do

- Stop physical activity and move to a cool place
- Drink water or a sports drink
- Wait for cramps to go away before resuming physical activity

#### Get medical help right away if:

Cramps last longer than 1 hour  
You're on a low-sodium diet  
You have heart problems

## WATCH THE AIR QUALITY

It's important to keep in mind that hot weather worsens air quality, including by increasing the amount of ozone low to the ground. Some people are more vulnerable to air pollution, including people with lung illnesses such as asthma; children, including teenagers, because they tend to spend more time outside than adults and have developing lungs; older adults; and people who do strenuous activities outside, such as athletes and workers.

Keep an eye out for air-quality alerts. Try to remain inside if the air quality is unhealthy for you, or consider wearing a high-quality mask outside. Close the fresh-air intake on your air conditioner to prevent outdoor air from getting inside when the air quality is unhealthy.

## SUNBURNS

Sunburns can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses by impairing the skin's ability to regulate body temperature. Sunburn damages the outer layer of the skin, which plays a crucial role in regulating body temperature. When the skin is damaged, its ability to sweat efficiently and cool the body is reduced, increasing the risk of overheating. The inflammatory response to sunburn can cause the skin to become red, swollen, and less effective at dissipating heat.

## ADDITIONAL RISK FACTORS

Heat can exacerbate a variety of illnesses and conditions. It's important to ask your doctor how you'll be affected by heat and whether you need to take extra precautions.



## STAYING SAFE WHEN IT'S HOT

**Stay hydrated.** Drink even if you're not thirsty. Make water your first choice. Drink a sports drink if you're sweating to restore salts and minerals to your body, but talk to your doctor first if you're on a low-salt diet, are diabetic, or have other chronic health conditions. Take salt tablets only if told to do so by a medical doctor.

**Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, or lots of sugar.** Alcohol raises the risk of dehydration, because it makes the body lose fluids faster. Also avoid very cold drinks, which can make your stomach cramp.

**Eat light, cool, easily digested food, such as fruit or salads.** Keep it out of the sun, and protect it with a cooler or ice pack. Be careful with foods that spoil quickly in the heat, such as dairy and meat. Hot and heavy food can make your body hotter.

**Avoid the heat.** Spend time in air-conditioned spaces during the hottest part of the day.

**Stay out of direct sun.** Seek shade under a tree or wherever you can find it.

**Dress for the weather.** Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothes.

**Pace yourself.** If you're not used to doing an activity in the heat, start slow and gradually pick up the pace.

**Plan your day around the heat.** Spend less time outside during the hottest time of day. If you need to do a strenuous activity outside, such as exercising, yard work, or playing a sport, consider shortening it, plan it for early or late in the day, or do it another day when it's cooler.

**Protect your skin, including with hats and sunscreen.** Sunburn makes it harder for your body to cool itself and can leave you dehydrated.

**Watch out for signs of heat-related illnesses.** Look for signs of illness in yourself and others, and call 911 if you see signs of heat stroke.

**Keep an eye out for health and safety updates.** Pay attention to the news, weather forecasts, and warnings about the weather from your local government.

**Take care of others.** Check in on your friends, family, neighbors, and pets—especially if they might need help. Children, older people, and those with chronic conditions may not be aware of how the heat affects them. Make sure they have what they need to stay cool, such as access to air conditioning, shade, and water.

**Seek out cooling centers.** During extreme heat, cooling centers may be set up. In addition, you can go to air-conditioned libraries, community centers, shopping centers, and other institutions during the hottest hours of the day.

## STAYING SAFE INDOORS

Cover your windows. Use shades or drapes to keep out the sun. Even hanging up clothes or cardboard can help.

Reduce the use of your stove or oven. Keep appliances that produce heat off, especially during daytime hours.

Close your windows during the daytime to keep hot air out. Open your windows at night when the temperature goes down.

Take cold showers and baths.

Apply for low-income programs if you qualify. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help pay cooling and heating bills or provide emergency services during a crisis, and the Weatherization Assistance Program can help you make home improvements to save money on energy.

## PLAN AHEAD FOR THE HEAT

Though hot weather can catch us by surprise, we know to expect it over the course of the year. Make plans and household improvements and set aside resources so that when hot weather hits, you're prepared.

**Tune up your A/C:** The best time to have a contractor tune up your A/C is before it's hot out. You may even be able to get a discount for booking early in the season.

**Read the manual:** Your A/C will operate better and have a longer lifespan with regular maintenance. Consult your A/C's manual to learn how to take the best care of it.

**Clean/replace filters:** A/Cs are more effective and have a longer life span when their filters are cleaned or replaced as recommended by their manual.

## HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Insulate your home, including around window air conditioners and in the attic and walls, and add weather strips to doors and windows.

Plant trees or other greenery near your windows that face south, east, or west. Trees can shade your windows and speed up evaporative cooling to make the area around your home cooler.

Consider installing a ventilator or fan in your attic. Such devices can clear out hot air.

See whether you qualify for the Weatherization Assistance Program. This federal program provides energy-efficiency improvements to low-income individuals and families.

## KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP

Research where you, your family, and your neighbors can go in an extreme heat event.

To locate a place to cool off near you, text **SHELTER** and your zip code to **43362 (4FEMA)** to find the nearest shelter in your area (example: "shelter 12345"). Alternatively, you can search your zip code at **www.211.org** to find cooling-off centers.

The Eldercare Locator can help you find a place to cool off: **eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx**.

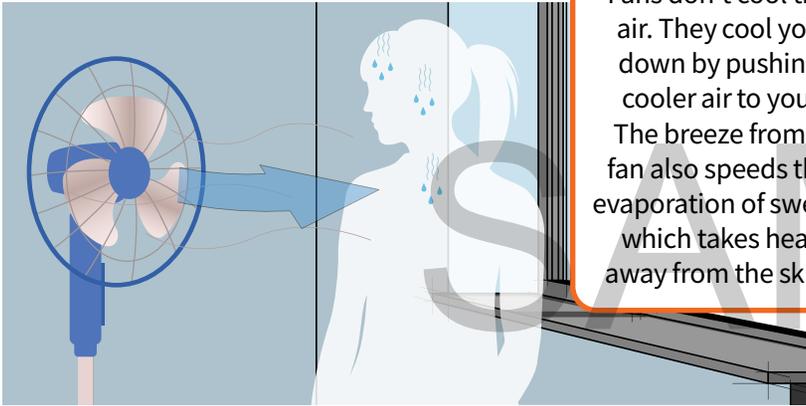
Your local health department or city can also direct you to air-conditioned shelters.



# USING FANS

During a heat wave, portable electric fans can provide much-needed relief, but fans can also increase heat risk if used improperly. It's important to remember that fans circulate air; they don't cool it. Therefore, avoid using them in closed, windowless spaces, where they'll blow hot air and increase the risk of heat exhaustion. When using fans in the heat, avoid blowing the air directly onto yourself, which will speed dehydration. Fans are most effective when the temperature outside is cooler than the temperature inside. Use them to either bring in cooler air or expel hotter air.

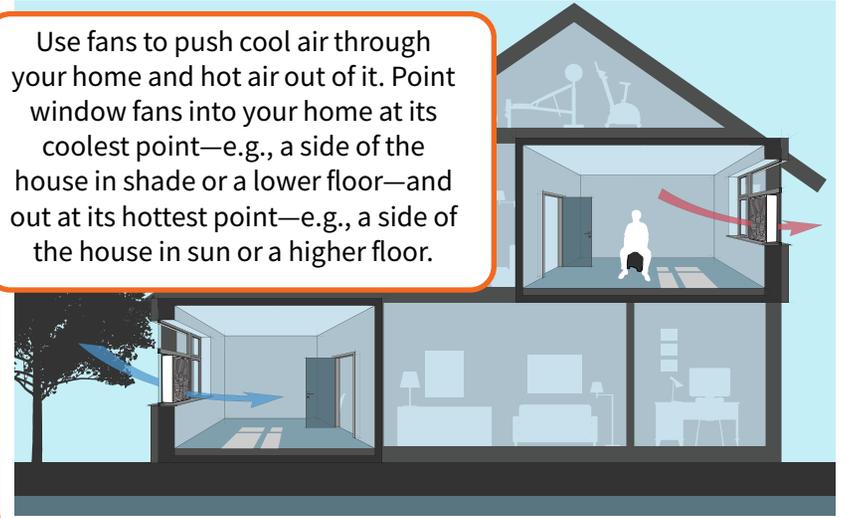
## HOW FANS WORK



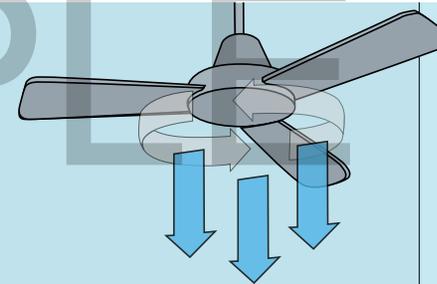
Fans don't cool the air. They cool you down by pushing cooler air to you. The breeze from a fan also speeds the evaporation of sweat, which takes heat away from the skin.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR FAN

Use fans to push cool air through your home and hot air out of it. Point window fans into your home at its coolest point—e.g., a side of the house in shade or a lower floor—and out at its hottest point—e.g., a side of the house in sun or a higher floor.



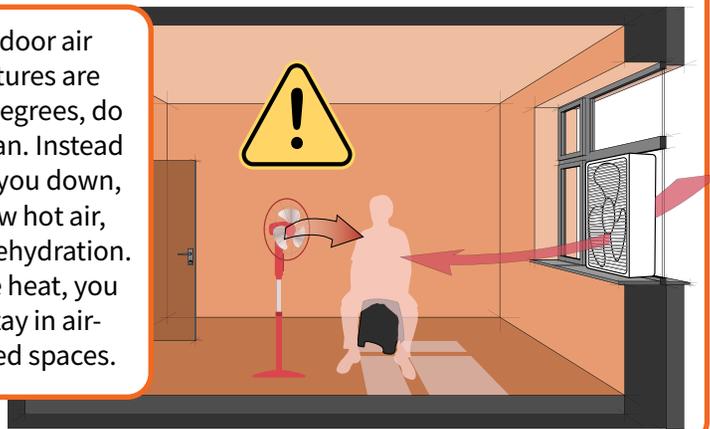
## USING CEILING FANS



During summer months, set your ceiling fan to counterclockwise to push cool air downward.

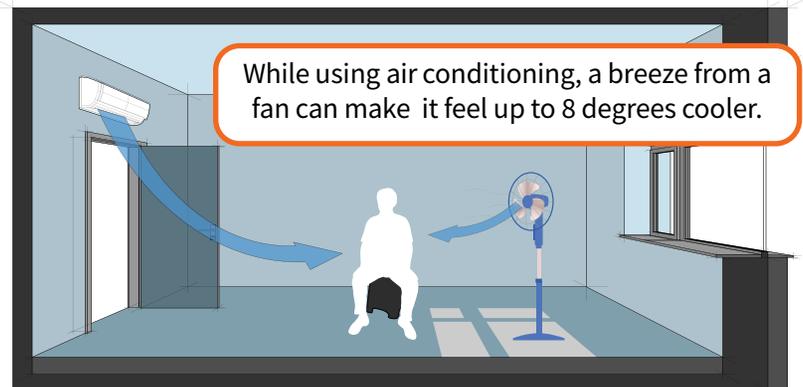
## WHEN NOT TO USE A FAN

When indoor air temperatures are above 95 degrees, do not use a fan. Instead of cooling you down, it will blow hot air, speeding dehydration. In extreme heat, you should stay in air-conditioned spaces.



## USING FANS WITH AIR CONDITIONING

While using air conditioning, a breeze from a fan can make it feel up to 8 degrees cooler.





## PRACTICE CAR SAFETY

Hot cars lead to the deaths of dozens of children in the U.S. each year. Cars can heat up fast and quickly become hotter than it is outside. Never leave anyone—including a child or pet—in a locked car. Take steps to prevent children from getting into parked cars. Opening a window does not prevent cars from becoming dangerously hot.

- **Never leave your child or a pet in a parked car.** Even if the windows are cracked open.
- **Find ways to remind yourself that your child is in the car.** Put an important item like a purse or backpack in the back seat so you have to check it before leaving the car.
- **Make sure that all children leave the car.** Check to make sure none of them have fallen asleep.
- **One in four deaths related to hot cars are of children who got into parked cars and became trapped.** Make sure that parked cars are locked and keys aren't accessible to kids. If a child is missing, immediately check the car. Look in the trunk and other potential hiding places.
- **Teach children about car safety.** Make sure kids know not to play in or around cars. Show them how to get out of cars and, if trunks have a safety latch, how to access it.
- **See a child alone in a vehicle?** Call 911 immediately if you see a child alone in a car. If they seem hot, sick, or unresponsive, get them out of the car as quickly as possible.

### HOW FAST DOES A CAR HEAT UP?

	10 MIN.	30 MIN.	60 MIN.
AIR TEMP 80°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 99°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 114°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 123°
AIR TEMP 90°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 109°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 124°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 133°
AIR TEMP 100°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 119°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 134°	 INSIDE CAR TEMP 143°

# UNDERSTANDING RISK FACTORS

Preparedness is especially important for people who are more vulnerable to high temperatures, including children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with certain health conditions. Take the time to talk to your doctor about your risk factors and how to protect yourself from the heat.

## INFANTS AND YOUNGER CHILDREN

Younger children and infants need help from their parents and caregivers to ensure they stay cool and drink enough water when it's hot. Babies' and young children's bodies don't respond to the heat in the way adults' bodies do, and they can have a harder time regulating their temperature and lose fluid more quickly. Children often spend a lot of time outside but may not have the judgment to take breaks or drink when they're hot.

- **Make sure your child is drinking fluids**, but avoid drinks that are high in sugar. Babies less than six months old should be fed a little more breast milk or formula in the heat, and babies over six months old should drink a little water.
- **Make their schedule safer.** Encourage them to spend time outside during cooler parts of the day, such as the morning or evening, instead of the middle of the day, or to reschedule for a cooler day.
- **Give babies and children breaks** in the shade or in air-conditioning.
- **If a baby is sweating, they're too warm.** Take them somewhere they can cool down.
- **Watch out for signs of dehydration.** Check your baby's diaper for concentrated urine, which can look like crystals. Other potential symptoms of dehydration are crying without tears, dry mouth, fussiness, and irritability. Avoid fans around babies, as they can dehydrate them faster. Call a doctor if their symptoms get worse or don't improve.

## OLDER ADULTS

As we age, our bodies become less able to adapt to changing temperatures, including changes in our skin. Older adults are also more likely to have one or more medical conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease. Limited mobility can make it more challenging to respond to danger, including from heat. Certain medications may affect the body's response to heat. Diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, and some heart and blood pressure drugs can reduce sweating.

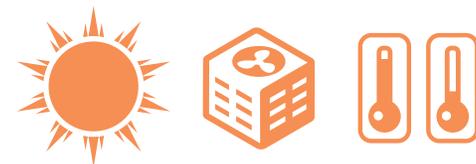
Talk to your doctor about the best ways to handle heat if they told you to limit your fluids, and also ask if your medication could make you more prone to overheating or sunburn.

Ask for help if you need it. Talk to friends or relatives if you need assistance getting to a cooler place. Various organizations offer cooling centers, including senior centers, certain religious groups, and Area Agencies on Aging.

Protect your skin. Use broad-spectrum sunscreen and reapply it according to the directions on the container. Wear a hat, sunglasses, and other protective clothing.

## PREGNANT WOMEN

Pregnant women, in particular, should be more cautious in the heat, which can lead to pregnancy complications and other health harms. In pregnant women, heat can lead to hypertensive disorders and strain the cardiovascular system. Heat exposure during pregnancy has also been connected to negative outcomes such as preterm births, stillbirths, and low birth weight.



## KEEPING PETS SAFE

Our four-legged friends are family members and need someone to keep an eye out for them during hot weather.

Provide plenty of water for your pets and leave it in a shady area.

Never leave your pet in the car on a warm day.

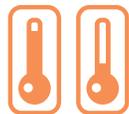
Watch out for asphalt and dark pavement. It can get very hot and burn your pet's paws. Walk your pet on grass when you can or purchase shoes to protect their paws.

Plan exercise around the heat. Exercise your pet in the morning or evening to avoid the hottest part of the day. Shorten exercise or make it less intense when it's hot out.

If your dog's outside, make sure it has shade and water.

Watch out for heatstroke. Signs of heatstroke include panting heavily or struggling to breathe; glazed eyes; a temperature of 104 degrees or higher; the appearance of being dizzy, uncoordinated, or lethargic; loss of consciousness or seizure; and a deep red or purple tongue.

Plan for emergencies. Have a plan for your pet if there's a power outage.



# RESOURCES

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Visit these sites for additional information:

## **FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)**

[www.ready.gov/heat](http://www.ready.gov/heat)

## **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)**

[www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat](http://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat)

## **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**

[www.weather.gov/safety](http://www.weather.gov/safety)

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