

# DEALING WITH EXTREME HEAT



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There is hot, and then there is hot! Extreme heat is a period of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. In extreme, heat your body works extra hard to maintain a normal temperature, which can lead to death. Extreme heat is responsible for the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards.



Older adults, children and sick or overweight individuals are at greater risk from extreme heat.



Humidity increases the feeling of heat.

## Prepare for Extreme Heat



- Learn to [recognize the signs of heat illness](#).

- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device. Fans create airflow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature or prevent heat-related illnesses.
- Identify places in your community where you can go to get cool such as libraries and shopping malls or contact your local health department to find a cooling center in your area.
- Cover windows with drapes or shades.
- Weather-strip doors and windows.
- Use window reflectors specifically designed to reflect heat back outside.
- Add insulation to keep the heat out.
- Use a powered attic ventilator, or attic fan, to regulate the heat level of a building's attic by clearing out hot air.
- Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.
- If you are unable to afford your cooling costs, weatherization or energy-related home repairs, contact the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) for help.

## Be Safe DURING



- Never leave people or pets in a closed car on a warm day.
- If air conditioning is not available in your home, go to a cooling center.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Use your oven less to help reduce the temperature in your home.
- If you are outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Avoid high-energy activities or work outdoors, during midday heat, if possible.
- Check on family members, seniors and neighbors.
- Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- Consider pet safety. If they are outside, make sure they have plenty of cool water and access to comfortable shade. Asphalt and dark pavement can be very hot to your pet's feet.
- If using a mask, use one that is made of breathable fabric, such as cotton, instead of polyester. Do not wear a mask if you feel yourself overheating or have trouble breathing.

## Heat-Related Illnesses

Know the signs of heat-related illnesses and ways to respond. If you are sick and need medical attention, contact your healthcare provider for advice and shelter in place if you can. If you are experiencing a medical emergency call 9-1-1.

Get more detailed information about heat-related illnesses from the [CDC](#) and [National Weather Service](#).



### HEAT STROKE

- **Signs:**
  - Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees F) taken orally
  - Red, hot and dry skin with no sweat
  - Rapid, strong pulse
  - Dizziness, confusion or unconsciousness

**If you suspect heat stroke**, call 9-1-1 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives. Do not give the person anything to drink.



### HEAT CRAMPS

- **Signs:** Muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms or legs



## HEAT EXHAUSTION

- **Signs:** Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, fast or weak pulse, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, vomiting

**If you have signs of heat cramps or heat exhaustion,** go to a cooler location and cool down by removing excess clothing and taking sips of sports drinks or water. Call your healthcare provider if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.

## Associated Content

- [Extreme Heat Information Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Extreme Heat Safety Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [Children, Pets and Vehicles \(weather.gov\)](#)
- [You Can Help Prevent Hot Car Deaths \(NHTSA\)](#)
- [Protective Actions Research for Extreme Heat](#)
- [National Weather Service Heat Safety Tips and Resources](#)
- [National Weather Service - Heat Illnesses](#)
  
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Extreme Heat](#)
- [Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness](#)
- [National Integrated Heat Health Information System](#)

For more information and tips go to <https://www.ready.gov/heat> Ready.gov or ReadyPA.gov

<https://www.ready.pa.gov/Are-You-Ready-PA/Pages/Article.aspx?post=42>.

National Weather Service <https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat>.