HOW TO BE PREPARED AT HOME

Drought

Factors that affect drought conditions include lack of rain and warmer temperatures, increased evaporation, and increased human water use.

Droughts can lead to:

- lower water levels in lakes, streams and rivers
- reduced soil moisture and groundwater levels
- declines in drinking water supply
- loss of commercial, industrial and agricultural production
- declines in water quality and reduced hydroelectric production
- declines in tourism, recreation and shipping
- loss of fish and wildlife habitat

If you are a homeowner or renter:

- repair all leaks in taps and toilets
- install low consumption toilets, dishwashers, shower heads, etc.
- follow municipal water use restrictions
- install rain barrels to collect rain water from roofs which can be used to water gardens
- choose drought-resistant trees and plants
- wash only full loads of laundry or dishes
- use rain gauges to measure how much water your crops are getting
- ensure the irrigation system doesn't water faster than the ground can absorb it

If you are a farmer:

- check your irrigation systems regularly for leaks
- irrigate in the evening or later in the day when temperatures are lower and there is less evaporation loss
- avoid irrigating during windy conditions
- use rain gauges to measure how much water your crops are getting
- ensure the irrigation system doesn't water faster than the ground can absorb it

If you work in the agricultural or manufacturing industries:

- set up a water conservation program
- survey plant operations
- determine ways to increase efficiency

HOW TO BE PREPARED AT HOME

Extreme Heat

What are extreme heat events?

Extreme heat events involve high temperatures and sometimes high humidity. Although the level of temperature extremes may vary between regions, unusually high heat can have negative impacts on your health.

What are the health risks?

Your body produces heat, especially during physical activity. Hot air, sun rays, and hot surfaces also heat your body. This heat is lost by contact with cool air and by sweat production, which cools your body as it evaporates.

Weather conditions play a big role in how your body regulates its temperature. For example, if it's windy, sweat evaporates faster, which helps to cool you. But high humidity slows down this process, contributing to increased body temperature.

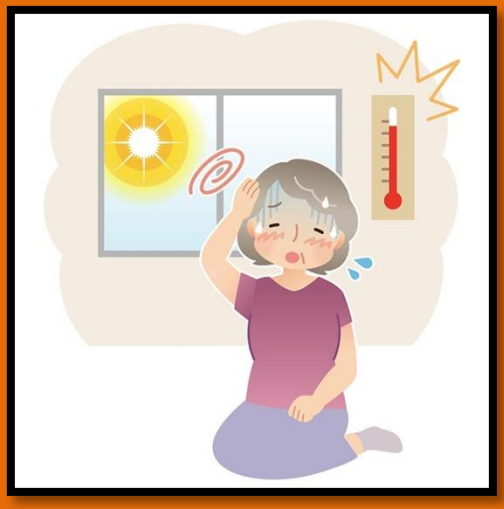
Heat illnesses can affect you quickly, and can lead to long-term health problems and even death. They are mainly caused by being over-exposed to extreme heat especially if you are doing too much for your age and physical condition.

Extreme heat can make you sick with:

- heat stroke
- heat rash
- heat cramps
- heat exhaustion

While extreme heat can put everyone at risk from heat illnesses, health risks are greatest for:

- older adults
- infants and young children
- people with chronic illnesses (like breathing problems, mental illness, heart problems)
- people who work in the heat
- people who exercise in the heat
- homeless people
- low-income earners



HOW TO BE PREPARED AT HOME

Safety Tips for Extreme Heat

Step 1 - Prepare for the heat

- Tune in regularly to local weather forecasts and alerts so you know when to take extra care.
- Arrange for regular visits by family members, neighbours or friends during very hot days in case you need help. Visitors can help identify signs of heat illness that could be missed over the phone.
- Find ways to keep cool before the hot weather starts. If you have an air conditioner, make sure it works properly. If you have ceiling fans or other fans they can help as long as the humidity isn't high. Find an air-conditioned spot close by where you can cool off for a few hours on very hot days. This will help you cope with the heat.
- Have cool drinks in your vehicle and keep your gas tank topped up.

Step 2 - Pay close attention to how you - and those around you - feel

Heat stroke is a medical emergency!

Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if you are caring for someone who has a high body temperature and is either unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating.

Watch for symptoms of heat illness, which include:

- dizziness or fainting
- nausea or vomiting
- headache
- rapid breathing and heartbeat
- extreme thirst (dry mouth or sticky saliva)
- decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine
- changes of behaviour in children (like sleepiness or temper tantrums)

If you have any of these symptoms during extreme heat, move to a cool place and drink liquids right away. Water is best.

While waiting for help - cool the person right away by:

- moving them to a cool place, if you can
- applying cold water to large areas of their skin or clothing
- fanning the person as much as possible

HOW TO BE PREPARED AT HOME

Safety Tips for Extreme Heat

Step 3 - Stay hydrated

Drink plenty of cool liquids (especially water) before you feel thirsty to decrease your risk of dehydration (not having enough fluids in your body). Thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration.

- Remind yourself to drink water by leaving a glass by the sink.
- Flavouring water with natural fruit juice may make it more appealing.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables as they have a high water content.
- If you eat less, you may need to drink more water.
- Drink water before, during and after physical activity.

Step 4 - Stay cool

Did you know?

Your body is not used to (not acclimatized to) extreme heat at the beginning of the summer. If you are physically active, you are also not acclimatized if you don't exercise regularly during hot weather.

Dress for the weather:

- Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed hat made of breathable fabric.
- When you buy sunglasses, make sure they provide protection against both UVA and UVB rays.

Take a break from the heat:

- If you must do physical activity in extreme heat, take extra breaks, remove gear to let your body cool off and drink lots of water. Don't expect your usual performance in hot weather. Give your body time to recover after being in the heat.

Keep your home cool:

- Make meals that don't need to be cooked in an oven.
- Block the sun by closing awnings, curtains or blinds during the day.
- If safe, open your windows at night to let cooler air into your home.
- If you have an air conditioner with a thermostat, keep it set to the highest setting that is comfortable (somewhere between 22°C/72°F and 26°C/79°F). This will reduce your energy costs and provide you with needed relief. If you are using a window air conditioner, cool only one room where you can go for heat relief.

If your home is extremely hot:

- Take cool showers or baths until you feel refreshed.
- Use a fan to help you stay cool and aim the air flow in your direction.
- Spend a few hours in a cool place. It could be a tree-shaded area, swimming facility or an air-conditioned spot like a shopping mall, grocery store, or public library.

HOW TO BE PREPARED AT HOME

Safety Tips for Extreme Heat

Step 5 - Avoid exposure to extreme heat when outdoors

Did you know?

Sunburned skin loses its sweating efficiency. This makes it harder for your body to regulate its temperature. Never leave people or pets inside a parked vehicle or in direct sunlight. When the outside air temperature is 23°C/73°F, the temperature inside a vehicle can be extremely dangerous - more than 50°C/122°F.

Reschedule or plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day.

- Before heading out, check the Air Quality Health Index in your area, if available. Air pollution tends to be at higher levels during very hot days.
- Plan strenuous outdoor activities for cooler days, or choose a cooler location like a place with air conditioning or with tree shade.

Avoid sun exposure. Find or bring shade when possible.

- Tree-shaded areas can be as much as 5°C/9°F cooler than the surrounding area.
- Shade yourself by wearing a wide-brimmed, breathable hat, or using an umbrella.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made of breathable fabric.
- Wear sunglasses that have UVA and UVB protection.
- Use a sunscreen with sun protection factor (SPF) 15 or higher and follow the manufacturer's directions. Don't use sunscreen on a child less than 6 months old.

Remember!

Sunscreen will help protect against the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays, but not from the heat.