

How to protect yourself from HEAT this summer



How do I know if dangerous heat is coming?

If dangerous heat is on the way, Environment and Climate Change Canada will send out notifications. There are two levels of notification:

- **Heat Warning:** at least three days of heat above certain thresholds that could result in heat health impacts.
- **Heat Emergency:** when heat thresholds are met and sustained/increased over a longer period, which could result in very significant heat health impacts.

Stay up to date:
Download the
WeatherCAN app



What do I need to do to prepare for heat?

- Get a digital thermometer so you know when your home is getting too hot.
- Identify a cooler space in your home and ensure you can sleep there.
- Have a working fan and/or air conditioner on hand.
- Install awnings, shutters, blinds or curtains over your windows to keep the sun out during the day.
- Think of people you know who might be vulnerable to heat and invite them to be your hot weather buddy. Let them know you'll be checking in on them.
- Find an air-conditioned spot close by where you can cool off (e.g., staying with friends or family, or places like libraries, community centres or shopping malls).

No AC? Check out the
**BC Hydro Free AC
Program**



What is a safe indoor temperature?

- Sustained temperatures **26°C and below are safe.**
- Sustained temperatures **26°C to 31°C may pose a risk to the most vulnerable.**
- Sustained exposure to temperatures **over 31°C should be avoided for vulnerable populations** whenever possible.

Find your nearest
cooling centre on
EmergencyMapBC.



Indoor environments may be **most dangerous overnight, especially for individuals who live alone.** If you are at risk and have no way to cool your home, find somewhere cool like a breezy park, public spaces with air conditioning, or stay with friends or family.

How do I keep my home cool during a heat event?

- Sleep in the coolest room of the house or even outside, if it's safe to do so.
- Shut windows and close shutters, curtains or blinds in the morning to keep cooler air in and to keep the sun out. Then open them again at night if/when the outdoor temperatures drop.
- Make meals that require minimal cooking.
- Protect yourself from the sun: stay in the shade, avoid direct sun mid-day, wear a hat and protective clothing, use sunscreen and wear UV-protective eyewear.

Scan here for
PreparedBC's **Extreme
Heat Preparedness
Guide**



How can I keep my body cool?

If you cannot access air conditioning and/or a cool room, consider:

- Drinking plenty of fluids, even if you're not thirsty.
- Wearing a damp shawl or shirt or mist yourself with a spray bottle.
- Taking a cool shower or sitting in a cool or tepid bath.
- Using a damp sheet at night.
- Putting an ice tray in front of a fan.

Important!

A fan alone is not enough to lower core temperature for older people at temperatures over 35°C.

What are the signs of heat-related illness and what should I do?

Mild to Moderate Heat-related Illness	Severe Heat-related Illness
Heavy sweating, headache, muscle cramps, extreme thirst, dark urine	High body temperature, confusion, dizziness/fainting and flushed skin with no sweating
If these symptoms develop, seek a cooler environment, drink plenty of water and use water to cool your body. Wear a wet shirt or apply damp towels to cool your skin.	This is a medical emergency – call 911. While waiting for help, cool the person right away by moving them to a cool place, if you can; apply cold water to large areas of the skin.

Check in with your hot weather buddy regularly. If you cannot check in-person, ask them to tell you what it says on their thermostat or indoor thermometer. If the room is above 31°C or they show signs of heat illness, encourage them to **take action immediately**.

Who is most vulnerable to heat?

- People who live alone or are socially isolated
- People who are chronically ill or take certain medications
- People who live with a disability or reduced ability
- People who live with mental health conditions, especially schizophrenia
- People who use substances
- People who are marginally housed
- People who work outdoors

Find out more about **medications** that affect vulnerability to heat



Pay close attention to children and older adults who may not be aware of developing heat illness, and pregnant people whose bodies have to work harder to keep themselves and their babies cool.

What if it's hot and smoky?

Heat generally causes more deaths on a hot day than smoke causes on a smoky day. However, many people impacted by heat are also impacted by smoke. If you belong to an at-risk group, **prioritize staying cool**. If you can't create a cooler, cleaner air space in your home, try visiting an air conditioned public space or a cooling center.

Learn more about **heat and smoke impacts** from BCCDC

