

Regional Heatwave Resilience Project

Building community preparedness



WEBSITE CONTENT

TARGET AUDIENCE – THE ELDERLY & PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Stage 1 Messages: General Community Awareness

These messages seek to raise general community awareness of heatwave / extreme heat impacts and preparedness and would be issued periodically during the lead up to and during summer.

Beat the Heat This Summer!

Heatwaves, or long periods of extreme heat, can have serious impacts on your health.

Heatwaves are a major cause of health problems every summer in Australia.

Heat related illness includes dehydration, heat stroke and heat cramps, while extreme heat can also seriously worsen existing health conditions including cardiac disease, mental health and behavioural disorders, asthma and obstructive lung conditions.

Four easy actions everyone can take to protect their health during extreme heat include:

Drink plenty of water and avoid alcoholic, hot or sugary drinks

Keep Cool – do less and avoid being outside during the hottest part of the day

Check on elderly friends, neighbours and relatives, especially if they live alone

Have a Plan for how to stay cool when it heats up

The Elderly and People with a Disability

The elderly and people with a disability are particularly susceptible to extreme heat. It is recommended people from these groups stay in regular contact with family, friends, carers or neighbours as temperatures rise so that they know you are okay or can provide help if needed. Make sure they also know your plan to manage during the heat.



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Other important ways to Beat the Heat:

1. Prepare your home, or part of your home as cool retreat

- To make your home more comfortable during the heat of the day, keep blinds and curtains closed to keep the heat out. If it is safe to do so, open them again in the evening or when the temperature drops to help cool down the house
- Set air conditioners to 24 degrees to reduce running costs, and turn on before the room heats up so it doesn't have to work as hard.

2. Think about your medications

- Some medications can increase the risk of heat related illness
- Some medications can be less effective or occasionally more toxic when exposed to and stored in high temperatures
- Most medications need to be stored below 25°C or in the fridge if indicated. This applies particularly to antibiotics, adrenergic drugs, insulin, analgesics and sedatives.
- Talk to your doctor about the correct use and storage of your medications and any affects they may have on you during hot weather.

3. Know the early signs of heat related illness:

- dizziness, fainting
- tiredness
- thirst
- bright or dark yellow urine.

If you or others experience any of these symptoms take steps to prevent it reaching dangerous levels. Move somewhere cool, drink water or diluted fruit juice (1 part juice in 4 parts water). Avoid tea, coffee or alcohol. If you start to feel unwell, seek medical advice.

For more information go to the NSW Health Beat the Heat website.

<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat>

Medication impacts

Heat can have a direct impact on medications, making them less effective or occasionally more toxic when exposed to and stored in high temperatures.

Some medications can also increase the risk of heat related illness.



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Most medications need to be stored below 25°C or in the fridge if indicated. This applies particularly to antibiotics, adrenergic drugs, insulin, analgesics and sedatives – so check your medications for details.

If you transfer your medicines to a pill box or Webster pack make sure these are stored in a suitable location. Keeping on the window sill or top of the fridge during a heatwave is probably not the best location.

Talk to your doctor about the correct use and storage of your medications and any affects they may have on you during hot weather.

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- tiredness
- thirst
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Take steps to prevent it reaching dangerous levels. Move somewhere cool, drink water or diluted fruit juice (1 part juice in 4 parts water). Avoid tea, coffee or alcohol. If you start to feel unwell, seek medical advice.

For more information about medications go to the NSW Health Beat the Heat website.
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat/Pages/information-for-health-professionals.aspx#medication>



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