

# Regional Heatwave Resilience Project

Building community preparedness



## WEBSITE CONTENT

### TARGET ISSUE – MEDICATION IMPACTS

#### **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

#### **Impacts on Your Medications**

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 not an ideal 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.

Know the early signs of heat related illness:

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

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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