



Extreme heat – health advice

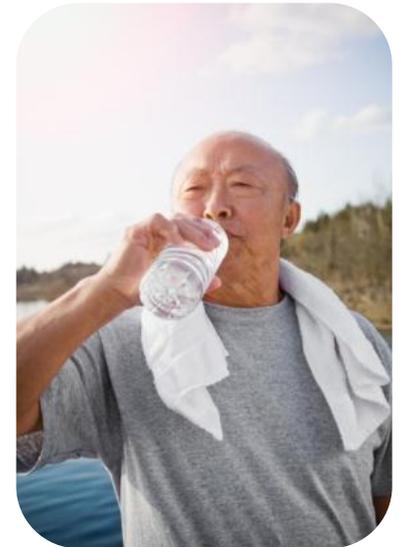
Being active in the heat

The risk of heat-related illness is greater when you exercise during hot, dry weather. Your body produces more heat and you may not sweat enough for your body to cool. If you exercise when it is humid, sweat may not be able to evaporate from your body.

You may start to feel ill and experience heat cramps, heat exhaustion or even heat stroke, which is an immediate medical emergency.

Taking precautions

- Use common sense - slow down during the heat, stay indoors as much as possible and avoid over exertion and strenuous activity.
- If an organised sporting event is scheduled on an extremely hot day, consider cancelling or postponing the event until the hot weather has passed.
- Exercise moderately in hot or humid weather and not at the same level you would during cool weather. If you start to feel ill, slow down or stop.
- Don't exercise if you feel unwell, or are recovering from a recent illness.
- Aim to exercise early in the morning, or at night when the temperature is cooler. Spend less time on your 'warm up' than you would in cooler weather.
- Try to find some shade if exercising outdoors.
- Protect children from over-exertion in hot weather, especially during intense or endurance exercise.
- Have a back-up plan to exercising outdoors when it is hot. Work out at an air-conditioned gym, walk laps inside a shopping centre or climb stairs in an air-conditioned building.



Drinking

- Drink plenty of water before and during exercise. At least two to three litres of water should be drunk each day during hot weather, and if you are exercising, you may need more.

Clothing

- Choose light-coloured, lightweight and loose fitting clothes to allow sweat to evaporate easily from the skin and provide protection from the sun. Cotton absorbs sweat whereas nylon and synthetic fabrics do not.
- Wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat (at least 7.5cm wide), or a legionnaire or bucket-style hat. Make sure it shades your face, neck and ears. Caps do not provide adequate protection from the sun.
- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen (minimum SPF30+) at least 20 minutes before exposure to the sun so it can be absorbed into the skin for effective protection. Re-apply every two hours or more often if sweating heavily, or if swimming in an outdoor pool or the ocean.

For more information, visit www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/healthy_communities/extreme_heat

Based on an original document produced by the South Australian Department for Health and Ageing