

# EXTREME HEAT

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Extreme heat is deadly. It kills more people than any other weather event. Climate change is making extreme heat events more frequent, more severe, and last longer.

Seniors are among the people most at risk. But we can take action to prepare ourselves and our loved ones when we know that extreme heat is forecast.

**Within a few years, here's how many more heatwaves these cities will have compared to the last century:**



### What Should You Do ?

#### 1. Be prepared

- Keep lots of water in the fridge.
- Make sure your phone is fully charged and that you know the telephone numbers of friends and family.
- Know where the cool places are, both in your building (the basement) and in the neighbourhood: cooling centre, shopping mall, library, community centre, local parks with trees.

#### 2. Stay hydrated

You need to drink enough water to prevent heat illness. An average person needs to drink at least 3 litres of water each day.

- You can check you are getting enough water by noting the colour of your urine. If it is dark yellow, you are not drinking enough water. Avoid sugary drinks and alcohol.
- If you are sweating a lot, combine water with snacks or a sport drink to replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.

#### 3. Try and stay cool

- Stay in an air-conditioned space as much as possible.
- If your home does not have air conditioning, go to a pre-arranged cool location.
- Wear lightweight loose clothing and take cool showers or baths.

- Limit your outdoor activity. If you have to work outside, schedule your work for earlier or later in the day.
- Do not rely only on a fan during extreme heat. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned space is a much better way to cool off.

#### 4. Prevent heat illness

Heat illness	What to look for	What to do
<b>Heat cramps are muscle spasms caused by a loss of salt and water in the body</b>	Heavy sweating with muscle pain or spasms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to a cool place</li> <li>• Drink water or a sports drink</li> <li>• Get medical help right away if cramps last longer than 1 hour or if the person has heart problems</li> </ul>
<b>Heat exhaustion is severe and may require emergency medical treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy sweating</li> <li>• Cold, pale and clammy skin</li> <li>• Fast weak pulse</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Muscle cramps</li> <li>• Dizziness, headaches, passing out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to a cool place</li> <li>• Loosen tight clothing</li> <li>• Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning or a cool bath</li> <li>• Sip water slowly</li> <li>• Get medical help right away if vomiting occurs; symptoms last longer than 1 hour; confusion develops</li> </ul>
<b>Heat stroke is deadly and requires immediate emergency treatment</b>	<p>High body temperature (40°C or higher)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot, red, dry or damp skin</li> <li>• Fast strong pulse</li> <li>• Headache and dizziness</li> <li>• Nausea, confusion, passing out</li> </ul>	<p><b>Call 911 right away, then</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to a cool place</li> <li>• Cool the body using wet cloths, misting, fanning or a cool bath</li> <li>• Do NOT give the person anything to drink</li> </ul>



For more information about extreme heat and how to cope, check out these links:  
<https://ofl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023.04-ExtremeHeatFactSheet.pdf>  
<https://www.ohcow.on.ca/edit/files/heatstressawareness/Heat%20Stress%20Awareness%20Guide.pdf>  
[https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/get-help/pdfs/heat/EN\\_Extreme-Heat-Safety-Checklist.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/get-help/pdfs/heat/EN_Extreme-Heat-Safety-Checklist.pdf)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat/risk-factors/extreme-heat-and-older-adults-aged-65.html>

**Seniors for Climate Action Now!** Is a dynamic seniors group advocating for action on climate change and other health and environmental crises. We welcome new members. The website is here: <https://seniorsforclimateactionnow.org/>