

HEAT AWARENESS AND SAFETY

MICHIGAN



This fact sheet explains some of the health risks associated with extreme heat. Read on for more information about heat-related illness and how you can protect yourself and your family when it is hot outside.

Health Risks

When the body's temperature rises and cannot be cooled by sweating during extreme heat, **heat-related illness** (HRI) or even death can happen. Death rates in many cities increase during heat waves, and not just due to heat strokes and related conditions.¹ Heat waves have also been linked with increased hospital admissions for cardiovascular, kidney, and respiratory disorders.¹

Who is most at-risk for HRI?

- People with chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease)
- Outdoor workers
- Low-income individuals and families
- Adults over 65 years of age
- Infants and children
- Athletes

How Can I Protect Myself?

Stay **Cool**



- Find somewhere with air-conditioning.
- Do not rely on a fan to keep you cool.
- Avoid direct sunlight.

- Take cool showers or baths.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.

Stay **Hydrated**



- Drink more water than usual.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.

- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids.
- Remind others to drink enough water.

Stay Informed



The **National Weather Service (NWS)** issues [heat advisories and warnings](#) when the heat index* is expected to rise to a dangerous level.

- An NWS heat advisory is issued in Michigan when the heat index value is expected to exceed 100°F for three consecutive hours, which can be extended into the night if low temperatures are in the 70s or higher.²
- An NWS heat advisory may be issued for lower criteria if it is early in the season or during a multi-day heat wave.²

*The heat index measures how hot it feels as a result of the combined effects of relative humidity and the actual air temperature.

Get alerts!

- Sign up for your local Emergency Notification System such as CodeRed for weather warnings.
- Pay attention to weather reports when it is hot or if a heat emergency is declared.
- Many weather phone apps also provide NWS heat alert information.

Explore Michigan data!

- Visit the [MiTracking Program site](#) and select the “**Go to the data**” button for Michigan data on HRI and extreme heat.
 - **For HRI data**, select the “Health” category and “Heat illness” content area.
 - **For extreme heat data**, select the “Environment” category, “Climate change” content area, and “Extreme heat (historical data)” indicator.
- Visit the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program \(MICHAP\)](#) to find more about how extreme heat and other climate effects can impact human health.

Additional Tips for Most-at Risk Groups

For people with chronic medical conditions:

- Talk with your primary care provider about how you should monitor and protect yourself during extreme heat.

For outdoor workers:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Ask if tasks can be scheduled for earlier or later in the day to avoid midday heat.
- If possible, work shorter shifts until your body has gotten used to the heat and take frequent breaks to rest and cool down.
- Download the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app:
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatapp.html>

For people without air conditioning:

- Use a buddy system - check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Contact [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) for help.
- **Text/call Michigan 211** or contact your local health department to locate a cooling center (e.g. public library) and air conditioned shelters in your area.
- Spend some time at a shopping mall or other public buildings - even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help.

Children in Cars

It only takes **two minutes** for a car to reach unsafe temperatures. Every year children left in parked vehicles die from hyperthermia, which occurs when the body absorbs more heat than it can handle.³

- Never leave your child, disabled person, or pet in your car, even if the windows are open.³
- Dress infants and children in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.

Other Resources

- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s [Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness](#).
- Visit the CDC's [Protecting Vulnerable Groups from Extreme Heat](#).
- Visit the CDC's [Tips for preventing heat-related illness](#).
- Visit the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's [Keep your pets cool](#).

References

1. CDC, National Center for Environmental Health. 2019. *Climate Effects on Health: Temperature Extremes*. Retrieved March 19, 2020, from [cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/temperature_extremes.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/temperature_extremes.htm)
2. National Weather Service. *Heat Awareness*. Retrieved March 19, 2020, from [weather.gov/dtx/heataware2](https://www.weather.gov/dtx/heataware2)
3. National Weather Service. *Children, Pets, and Vehicles*. Retrieved March 19, 2020, from [weather.gov/safety/heat-children-pets](https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-children-pets)

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