

HEAT AWARENESS AND SAFETY

MICHIGAN



During the summertime, Michigan can experience extreme heat, where temperatures are much hotter and/or more humid than average. When temperatures go up, some people can be more at risk for heat-related illness (HRI).

Health impacts

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**



Stay **Hydrated**



- Find somewhere with air-conditioning.
- Do not rely on a fan to keep you cool.
- Avoid direct sunlight.
- Drink more water than usual.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.
- Take cool showers or baths.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more fluids.
- Remind others to drink enough water.



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 Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness](#).
- Visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [Protecting Vulnerable Groups from Extreme Heat](#).
- Visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention'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)

This report was prepared by the [Michigan Climate and Health Adaptation Program](#) and [MiTracking Program](#), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, July 2020.