

Be cool: How to stay safe in the heat

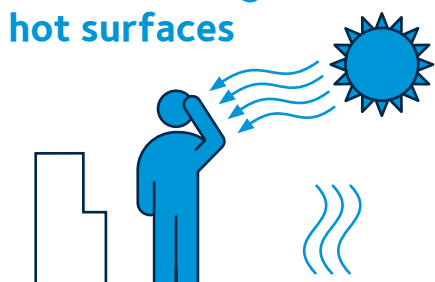
Getting too hot can be dangerous – especially if you are aged under 5, pregnant, over 65, or have an illness. So, what can you do?

Staying cool starts with understanding where heat comes from and how your body gets rid of it.



How your body gains heat

Direct sunlight and heat radiating from hot surfaces



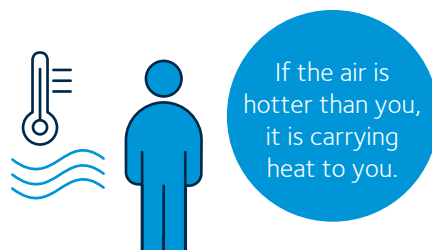
If outside

- Stay in the shade, especially under trees where the air is often cooler.
- If in the sun, wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen, and loose white clothes.

If inside

- Keep the sun out: close blinds, curtains, and shutters, especially on windows exposed to direct sunlight.
- Use thick, preferably white sheets to reduce heat entering the building.

Heat carried to you in the air

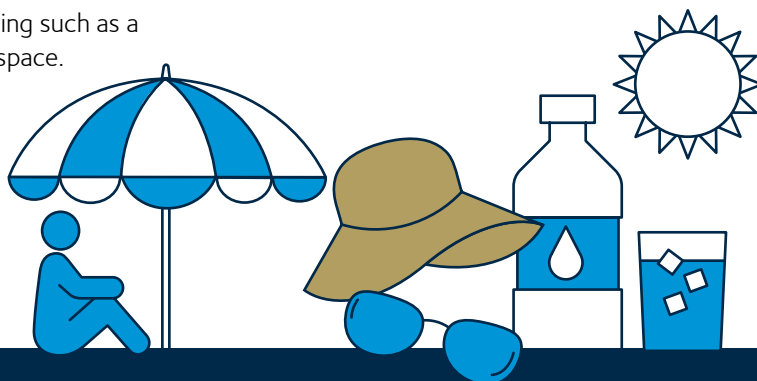


- When it is hotter outside than inside, keep doors and windows closed.
- Open windows and doors when the outside temperature becomes cooler.
- If possible, go somewhere with air conditioning such as a community space.

Heat you make yourself



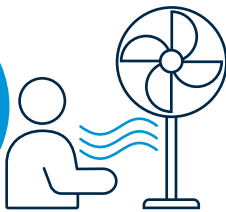
- Avoid intense exercise, whether work or play.
- Eat light meals.



How your body cools down

Cool air movement

If the air is cooler than you, it will carry heat away.



- Find a cool breeze, preferably in the shade.
- Using a hand or electric fan over the whole body is better than just the face.
- Wear loose-fitting clothes to allow air movement.

Evaporation

Evaporating water from your skin takes heat away from you.



Keep well hydrated, so that you can sweat enough and have enough blood available to carry heat to the skin.

- Drink cool water, a sports or rehydration drink, or eat water-rich foods like watermelons.

Spray or sponge yourself with cool water.

Use a fan directed at your whole body to speed up evaporation. Over 35°C, fans are not very effective, so concentrate on finding somewhere cool (older adults, infants, and those with chronic health conditions are less efficient at sweating and should not rely on a fan alone once temperatures reach 32°C).

Dehumidify the air inside if you can.

Carrying heat away

Cooling certain areas helps you lose heat more effectively.



Wrap an icepack or pack of frozen peas in a tea towel and place in areas such as your armpit and your groin. The pack will carry heat away from big arteries found in these areas.

Hold cold bottles of fluid (which you can also drink), to carry heat away from your hands.

A cool shower helps carry heat away. Run it slow to save water and bills!

A cool swim can help, but take care:

- Get in slowly; sudden 'cold shock' can kill!
- Stop and think "is it safe?" before you enter the water.
- Go with others to supervised locations.
- Stay in your depth.



If you get in trouble in the water: "Float to Live"

If you see someone in trouble: phone the emergency services, tell the person to float and try to throw them something that will help them float.

Watch out for others

Know anyone who is alone? Ill? Housebound? Poorly? Elderly? How about checking in with them, and helping them stay cool?

Watch out for yourself

It's never too late to start getting fit! Being unwell increases the odds that heat will hurt you. So, while it's cool, set about taking exercise. Losing weight. Move to a plant-rich healthy diet.

More information

Government advice for hot weather: gov.uk/guidance/beat-the-heat-advice-for-hot-weather

Heat exhaustion vs heat stroke: nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke

Float to live: rnli.org/water-safety/float

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