

keeping kids cool

TIPS FOR EXTREME HEAT

Guidelines for families, caregivers, and child care facilities

- If you do not own an air conditioner, keep blinds or curtains closed to keep some sunlight out, use fans in windows for cross ventilation, and be open to seeking out a cooling center by calling your local health department or emergency management agency.
- Children, infants, the elderly, those with special healthcare needs, and pets should never be left unattended in a vehicle. Remain vigilant when leaving your car to run errands or when you get home. A child's body heats up three to five times faster than an adult's, and a car interior can heat up 40 degrees inside no matter how hot or cloudy it is outside.
- Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water when it's hot. Before any event that requires physical exertion (such as sports practice, park time, or recess), children should drink appropriate fluids. They should be reminded to drink during and after as they are likely to forget to hydrate.
- If you or your child has a chronic medical condition (e.g. Type I or Type II Diabetes, obesity, or asthma), take extra precautions during extreme heat events by staying out of the heat, take breaks when outdoors, and remain adequately hydrated.
- Parents and caregivers: if your child is on any type of medication, learn whether or not it may increase your child's risk of heat-related illness. Notify their coach/trainer/PE teacher for close monitoring of your child's condition during extreme heat.
- Recent or current illnesses such as fever, diarrhea, or vomiting can interfere with the body's ability to cool down and stay hydrated. Try to limit exercise or sit out from activities during extreme, or prolonged, heat exposure.
- Kids can be good neighbors and check in on the elderly during heat waves to ensure that they receive assistance if necessary. The elderly often live in isolation, may have mobility issues, and/or pre-existing physical and mental health conditions. They may also be less likely to seek help if they need it.
- Extreme heat events are a good time to update your Emergency Action Plans (EAP). Parents, make sure your plan takes into account extreme heat and ensure your child's coach/child care provider or facility has procedures in place to address heat-related illness. Don't be afraid to ask!
- Keep in mind your child's mental health well-being during extreme heat events. Have a fun line-up of activities such as card/board games, reading time, and coloring books if it's too hot to be outdoors.
- Power outages are increasingly likely during extreme heat events – so be prepared! Along with your regular emergency supplies, include extra clean water for the entire family (~2 gallons of water per day per person) and pets. Breastfeeding mothers and infants on formula may need extra clean water. Remember, clean water isn't just for drinking; it can be used to wash your hands and stay sanitary.