

# AND THEN... the heat was just too much

**Extreme heat doesn't call ahead. That's why urban populations *plan ahead*.**

Extreme heat events are becoming more frequent and severe in Ontario. Heat warnings are issued when daytime temperatures reach 29-31°C, depending on the region, for two or more days in a row with no overnight relief. High humidity can also play a factor.

**We can't turn the heat down, but we can prepare for it.**

Prolonged exposure to extreme heat can lead to severe health issues, including dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which untreated, can be fatal. Everyone is at risk, however some groups are especially vulnerable – including older adults, young children, people with chronic health conditions, outdoor workers, the unhoused and people without access to air conditioning.

In urban environments, dense development, lack of green spaces and poorer air quality can intensify the heat further, increasing the health risks. The steps in this guide can help keep you, your family and your community safe.

## Before the heatwave

Reinforce your emergency preparedness kit with items to help keep you cool, hydrated and protected from the sun. (See checklist on back page.)

Get groceries in advance especially foods and snacks you can eat cold without heating up the oven.



## During the heatwave

Stay cool. Wear light-coloured and loose-fitting clothing.



Stay hydrated. Drink water often. Don't wait until you are thirsty.

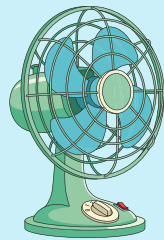


Limit heat exposure. Stay indoors if you can.



### Indoors

Keep your home cool. Close curtains and blinds during the day. Use fans and air conditioning.



Take a cool shower, bath or use cool, wet towels to cool off.

Identify your home's cooler spots (usually on lower floors) and prepare them for sleeping.

### Outdoors

Limit outdoor activities to early morning or late evening when it's cooler. Avoid strenuous activity.

Stay in the shade and use sun protection.

Never leave people or pets in parked vehicles. The inside temperature can rise quickly.

Take extra precautions when attending outdoor festivals or events. Know where you can cool off.

Check on those who may be at higher risk, including the unhoused. If you see anyone in distress, call 911.

  
**EMERGENCY  
COOLING  
CENTRE**

## Know where you can cool off

Downtown and high-density areas can trap heat, raising temperatures even further. If your home gets too hot, head to a cool space like a shaded park, mall, library, pool, community centre, grocery store or other air-conditioned public space.

During an extreme heat event, your community may open designated cooling centres. Visit your municipality for more information: [ontario.ca/Municipalities](https://ontario.ca/Municipalities)



# Extreme heat health risks

Extreme heat affects everyone, but if you work outdoors or in high heat workplaces such as industrial plants, bakeries and commercial kitchens, you should take extra precautions. Heat stress can worsen when combined with physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue or a pre-existing medical condition. Know what to watch for and what to do.

## Heat exhaustion

Your body can overheat from high temperatures especially if the humidity is high, you are involved in physical activity or you are dehydrated. Early heat exhaustion signs can include:

- headache or fatigue
- nausea or vomiting
- dizziness, feeling lightheaded or fainting
- extreme thirst, dry or sticky mouth

### What to do:

Move to a cool place, rest and rehydrate. If you don't feel better soon, consult a health care provider or call Health811 at 811 (TTY: 711)

## Heat stroke

Heat stroke is a potentially fatal medical emergency. Symptoms can include:

- high body temperature
- dizziness or fainting
- very hot or red skin without sweating
- confusion, slurred speech and lack of coordination

### What to do:

Seek medical help or call 911 immediately. While waiting for help, cool the person by moving them to a cool place if possible, removing extra clothing and shoes, fanning them and applying cold water to their skin or clothing or ice packs around their body.

## Stay informed

Follow us for more emergency preparedness tips and information:



Find cooling centres in your community at: [ontario.ca/Municipalities](http://ontario.ca/Municipalities)



# Be prepared for extreme heat

Emergencies can happen suddenly. Consider putting together an emergency plan and preparedness kit with the items you and your household need to be safe and take care of yourselves for at least three days following an emergency.

## Your emergency preparedness kit should include:

- non-perishable food and a can opener
- bottled or bagged water (4 litres per person/day)
- medications
- toilet paper and other personal items
- back up chargers and power banks
- cash in small bills
- flashlight, headlamp or glow stick
- radio (crank or battery-run)
- extra batteries
- first-aid kit
- candles and matches/lighter
- hand sanitizer or moist towelettes
- important papers and identification
- extra car and house keys
- whistle
- zip-lock and garbage bags
- duct tape
- baby and pet supplies

## During a heat event, consider reinforcing your emergency preparedness kit with items to help keep your family cool, hydrated and protected from the sun:

- extra drinking water
- sunglasses with full UVA and UVB
- sunscreen with 30 SPF or higher
- wide-brimmed sun hats
- spray bottle misters



Stock up on electrolyte-containing foods, like bananas (potassium), pumpkin seeds (magnesium), pretzels or crackers (sodium).



You can make your own electrolyte drink by mixing 1 litre of water or juice with 6 tsp. of sugar and ½ tsp. of salt.



**Pack your kit in an easy-to-carry bag or a case on wheels.**

**Store your kit in a place that is easy to reach quickly.**

**You can build your kit over time, adding items every time you go to the store.**

**Connect with your community to see how you can support each other. Your municipality or local government may also have supplies available.**

**For more information on putting together an emergency preparedness kit or how to make an emergency plan, go to: [ontario.ca/BePrepared](https://ontario.ca/BePrepared)**