

Keeping your body cool during extreme heat can help prevent harms to your health.

Ways to stay cool during extreme heat*:

✓ Drink plenty of water

- Drink more fluids than you usually do, and especially during and after any activity while you are outside.
- Drink fluids even when you do not feel thirsty.
- Flavour water to make it taste better.
- Eat foods with high water content, like fruit & veggies.

✓ Use fans & water to cool your body

When temperatures get too high (above 35°C), fans are not enough to keep you cool.

Apply cool water (mist, wet towels, or taking a shower or bath) to your body and sit in front of a fan as a quick way to cool off.

✓ Keep your space cool

Indoors:

- Open windows at night to let cooler air in; close windows in the morning before sun starts to come in.
- Put light-coloured or reflective material (like tin foil, white blinds, or curtains) to cover windows during the day.

In a tent:

- Use a tent with more mesh, if possible.
- Move your tent into the shade.

✓ Move to cooler spaces

If your current space gets too hot (above 31°C):

- Move to spaces that have A/C.
- Move to areas with shade.
- Try to stay in a place with A/C or in a cooler area for a few days.

If you have mobility concerns, or it is hard for you to get to a cooler space, ask a friend, neighbour, or other support person for help.

✓ Protect your skin from the sun

If you are outdoors:

- Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting, breathable clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Use sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher).

✓ Do activities during cooler parts of the day

- Try to do activities, like grocery shopping or walking your dog, during cooler parts of the day.
- Take many rest breaks.
- Move to cooler, shaded areas.

*Some people may not be able to follow all of these tips. Do what you can and reach out for support when possible.



Know when to get medical help

Learn the signs and symptoms of heat illness:

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.		Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency. It can cause death or permanent disability.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dizziness • Thirst • Heavy sweating • Nausea • Weakness 	ACT FAST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Loss of consciousness 	CALL 9-1-1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move to a cooler area • Loosen clothing and remove extra layers • Cool with water or ice
High heat lasting several days impacts people's mental health and how they cope. Seek medical care for increased: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Psychological distress • Aggression or violence • Suicidal thoughts 			



Heat stroke is a medical emergency! call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention from a trusted service provider right away if you or someone else has a high body temperature (39°C or higher) and is either unconscious or unusually confused.



Stay connected with others

Check-in regularly with family, friends, and neighbours, including pets. In-person visits are best so you can see how they are doing. Make sure they are drinking enough fluids and have a place to stay cool.

If you are connected to a health centre or other service, it is possible they will have someone come to check on you during a heatwave to make sure you have access to cooling strategies, resources, and fluids.

Check weather reports and alerts:

[BC Heat Impacts Prediction System \(BCHIPS\)](#)

[Public Weather Alerts for British Columbia](#)

[WeatherCAN](#)

[Heat Warning Criteria](#)

Helpful Heat Resources:

[Extreme heat events: How to protect yourself from the health effects](#)

[Infographic: Staying healthy in the heat](#)

[Infographic: It's much too hot!](#)

References:

- [Safer Drinking Tips](#)
- [Health effects of hot weather: from awareness of risk factors to effective health protection](#)
- [Health risks and who is at risk from extreme heat events](#)
- [Health Canada: Heat Events and Health](#)
- [An adaptation index to high summer heat associated with adverse health impacts in deprived neighborhoods](#)