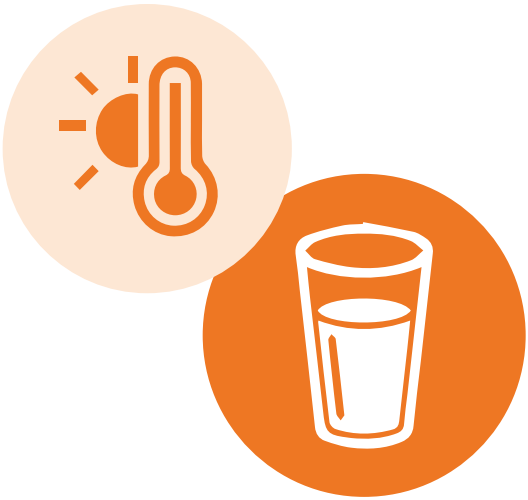
Leicestershire County Council

# Stay safe and well this summer



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# Stay safe and well this summer

Hot weather can very quickly affect your health and wellbeing. By planning ahead, you can stop or reduce these risks and keep yourself and other people who are more vulnerable safe and well.

# Why is a heatwave a problem?

**The main risks posed by a heatwave are:**

- not drinking enough water (dehydration)
- overheating, which can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing
- heat exhaustion and heatstroke

# Who is most at risk?

**A heatwave can affect anyone, but the most vulnerable people are:**

- older people – especially those over 75
- those who live on their own or in a care home
- people who have a serious or long-term illness or some mental health conditions
- those who may find it hard to keep cool – babies and the very young, the bed bound, those with drug or alcohol addictions or people with Alzheimer's disease
- people who spend a lot of time outside or in hot places – those who live in a top floor flat, the homeless or those whose jobs are outside or in environments prone to overheating because of the equipment or machinery in use

# Tips for coping in hot weather

## Keep your body temperature down by:

- Taking regular cool showers or baths, or at least an overall body wash
- Wearing light, loose cotton clothes to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation
- Sprinkling your clothes with water regularly and splashing cool water on your face and the back of your neck – a damp cloth on the back of the neck helps temperature regulation
- Choosing cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high-water content
- Drinking regularly, preferably water or fruit juice, but avoid alcohol and caffeine (tea, coffee, colas)
- Monitoring the daily fluid intake of vulnerable people (particularly if they have several carers or are not always able to drink unaided)

## Keep your home or workplace cool by:

- Staying out of heat traps such as conservatories
- Staying inside, in the coolest rooms, as much as possible
- Closing the curtains/blinds in rooms that get a lot of sun (curtains with pale reflective linings are better at keeping the heat out)
- Trying to keep windows closed while the room is cooler than it is outside. Open them when the temperature inside rises, and at night for ventilation - unless it is a security risk
- Watering external and internal plants and spraying the ground outside ground floor windows with water to help cool the air

Water sprays and electric fans can provide some relief, but at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and can cause excess dehydration. Fans should not be aimed directly at the body and people should have regular drinks. This is particularly important for people confined to bed.  Be aware that plastic pads and mattresses can be particularly hot during a heatwave.

## Protect yourself and others when outdoors by:

- Avoiding going out in the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm) if possible
- Wearing light and loose-fitting clothing to form a barrier
- Wearing a hat with a brim or flap to cover ears and the back of the neck
- Waiting to exercise until the coolest part of the day
- Staying in the shade wherever possible
- Regularly applying sunblock, or broad-band sunscreens with high sun protection factors (at least SPF 15) to exposed skin
- Drinking regularly, preferably water or fruit juice to avoid dehydration and taking water with you, if you are travelling

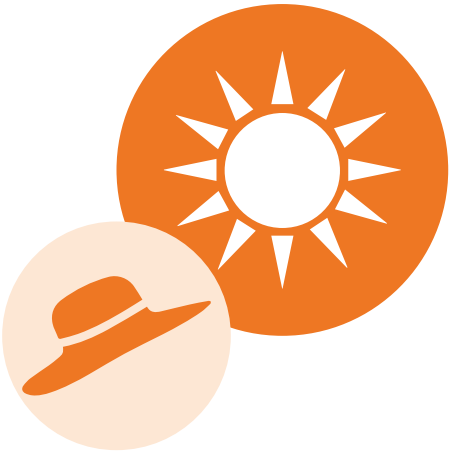
People who should take particular care are those who have fair or freckled skin that doesn't tan or goes red or burns before it tans; red or fair hair and light-coloured eyes; or have a lot of moles.

Check your skin regularly for unusual moles – seek advice immediately should you find anything unusual.

Working in the sun can be a serious hazard for outdoor employees during a heatwave and it's important to protect yourself and others by following the advice shown above.

More information and advice is available from the Health & Safety Executive, visit **www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/outdoor.htm**
**www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg147.pdf**



## Prepare for travelling safely during hot weather by:

- Making sure your vehicle is fit for the journey (check your tyres and make sure your radiator and windscreen wash are topped up)
- Making sure your engine stays in its normal operating temperature range. If it begins to overheat, find somewhere safe to stop and allow it cool down
- Wearing sunglasses, as bright sunshine can lower visibility and make driving difficult
- Taking drinking water with you, to prevent dehydration
- Keeping your vehicle as cool as possible by using the air conditioning (or opening the windows if it is safe to do so)
- Checking the weather forecast and adjusting your travel arrangements to avoid the hottest times of the day if you can

For more information and advice on being weather ready, visit **highwaysengland.co.uk** and **www.metoffice.gov.uk**

or

**nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/travelling-in-severe-weather/travelling-in-summer/**

**www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/weatherready**

Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants, young children, or animals.

If you are going into open water to cool down, take care and follow local safety advice



# Watch out for signs of heat related illness

If you or someone else feels unwell with a high temperature during hot weather, it may be heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

## Symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke include:

- a headache
- dizziness and confusion
- loss of appetite and feeling sick
- excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin
- cramps in the arms, legs, and stomach
- fast breathing or pulse
- a high temperature of 38C or above
- being very thirsty

The symptoms are often the same in adults and children, although children may become floppy and sleepy. If someone is showing signs of heat exhaustion, they need to be cooled down quickly.

## You should also watch out for signs that could be attributed to other causes, such as:

- Difficulty sleeping, drowsiness, faintness, and changes in behaviour.
- Increased body temperature.
- Difficulty breathing and increased heart rate.
- Dehydration, nausea, or vomiting; or worsening health problems, especially of heart or respiratory system.

Heat exhaustion is not usually serious if you can cool down within 30 minutes. If it turns into heatstroke, it needs to be treated as an emergency.

# Emergency treatment

If you suspect someone has heatstroke and they are still feeling unwell after 30 minutes of resting in a cool place and drinking plenty of water, call 999.

## While waiting for the ambulance:

- Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly
- Keep them as cool as possible by spraying or sponging them with cool water
- Encourage them to keep drinking water, sports or rehydration drinks are OK

For more information on prevention, symptoms and treatment visit **www.nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/**

For more information on identifying who can be at risk and ways of coping in hot weather, please see **www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather/**

