



Heat wave medical fact sheet

Introduction

Western Australia is a hot state, which is getting hotter with the process of Climate Change. It is important to be aware of the effects of heat on the body and how to help yourself stay healthy and feeling well during these periods of extreme heat. The young, elderly, disabled, those who work in outdoor settings and people with existing medical conditions are at the greatest risk of harm from high temperatures.

How to prevent harm from the heat:

- Drink plenty of fluid (not caffeinated, energy or alcoholic drinks).
- Find a cool place, in the shade or in a well ventilated shelter with fans or air-conditioning.
- Cool down periodically in water (swimming pool, bath or shower).
- Wear lightweight, light-colour, loose fitting clothing and head protection.
- Limit physical activity and avoid exercising in the heat of the day.
- Apply effective sunscreen (SPF 30+) if outside.
- Monitor the colour of your urine (dark yellow is bad, clear urine is good).
- Remember “Slip, Slop, Slap” at all times when outside.

Signs to be on the look out for:

- increased heart rate
- nausea and vomiting
- dizziness and feeling faint
- confusion
- headaches
- muscle cramps and weakness
- urinating less often.

Life threatening signs may include

- seizures
- reduced level of consciousness
- dry, red, hot skin.

What to do should you develop any of the signs above:

- Call an ambulance on 000 for life threatening signs.
- Rest in a cool well ventilated area.
- Drink plenty of fluid (consider clear juice or low sugar sports drinks).
- Apply cool wet cloths to skin.
- **SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IF YOUR CONDITION DOES NOT IMPROVE**
 - Healthdirect Australia: 1800 022 222
 - Contact your GP or
 - Attend your local Emergency Department.

Please do not forget to check in on your elderly neighbours and ensure your pets have plenty of fresh water and shade available.

For more information on how to keep healthy during extreme heat, including specific advice on older people, exercising, young children and pets, please visit our website:

www.public.health.wa.gov.au/3/1299/2/heat_events.pm

