<https://tpchd.org/healthy-places/emergency-preparedness/keep-cool/>

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**Keep Cool**

**When the weather heats up, know how to keep cool.**

When outside temperatures are high, the danger for heat-related illness rises. People over age 60 or under age 18, and people with mental illness and chronic diseases are at particularly high risk.  
  
Keep your family safe with these tips:

**If you need to spend time outside.**

* Seek shade. Limit the time you’re in direct sunlight.
* Shift outdoor activities to the cooler morning and evening hours.
* Check the [UV Index forecast](https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety/uv-index-applications) and avoid sunburn. Use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (sun protection factor) rating.
* Wear a wet scarf, bandana or shirt. This helps cool you quickly.
* Dress in lightweight clothing.
* [Visit a cooling center](https://www.piercecountywa.gov/6226/Hot-Weather-Information). Spend time at a shopping mall, grocery store or public location—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help.
* Drink plenty of water. Don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink.
* Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol and lots of sugar—they dehydrate you.

**Reduce heat indoors.**

* Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun.
* Trap heat with closed doors. If one room gets hotter than other parts of your home, close the doors to keep the heat trapped in that room.
* Turn off the lights and limit electronics use. These devices create heat.
* Use your oven or stove less. Cooking with heat increases the temperature inside.
* Put a bowl of ice under a fan. The fan can circulate air cooled by the ice.
* If possible, stay on the lowest floor. If you are in a multi-story unit, the lowest level stays the coolest.
* Stay inside during the hottest times of the day— afternoon and early evening.
* Eat light meals. Avoid hot and heavy meals—they add heat to your body.
* Take cool showers or baths.

**Take care of your community.**

* Check on your elderly neighbors and relatives. Encourage them to keep cool and hydrated.
* Never leave children, people with mobility challenges, or pets in parked cars.
* Water temperatures in Puget Sound can be dangerously cold.
  + Choose a safer location to swim—visit a local pool or beach with a lifeguard on duty and always wear a life jacket.
  + Learn more about staying safe outdoors on our [Injury Prevention pages](https://tpchd.org/healthy-people/injury-prevention/outdoors/).

**Know the signs of heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.**

**Heat cramps**

**Signs:**Muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms or legs.

**Actions:** Go to a cooler location. Remove excess clothing. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. If you are sick and need medical attention, call your healthcare provider. If cramps last more than an hour, seek medical attention.

**Heat exhaustion**

**Signs:**Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, vomiting.

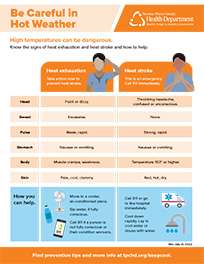
**Actions:** Go to an air-conditioned place and lie down. Loosen or remove clothing. Take a cool bath. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Call your healthcare provider if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.

**Heat stroke**

**Signs:** Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees). Red, hot and dry skin with no sweat. Rapid, strong pulse. Dizziness, confusion or unconsciousness.

**Actions:** Call 9-1-1 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives.

**Know the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke.**

[](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Heat-Exhaustion-vs-Heat-Stroke.pdf)

Available in:

* [English](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Heat-Exhaustion-vs-Heat-Stroke.pdf).
* [Español (Spanish).](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Be-Careful-in-Hot-Weather-Spanish.pdf)
* [한국어 (Korean).](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Be-Careful-in-Hot-Weather-Korean.pdf)
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* [អក្សរខ្មែរ (Khmer).](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Be-Careful-in-Hot-Weather-Khmer.pdf)
* [Gagana fa’a Samoa (Samoan).](https://tpchd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Be-Careful-in-Hot-Weather-Samoan.pdf)

**Resources:**

* [HeatRisk tool](https://www.wrh.noaa.gov/wrh/heatrisk/)—National Weather Service’s forecasted risk of heat-related events
* [Hot Weather Safety](https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/be-prepared-be-safe/severe-weather-and-natural-disasters/extreme-heat/hot-weather-precautions)—Get even more tips from the Washington State Department of Health.
* [National Integrated Heat Health Information System](https://www.heat.gov/)—Source of heat and health information for the nation to reduce the health, economic, and infrastructural impacts of extreme heat.