

- **Plan how you can change daily activities to avoid strenuous work during the warmest part of the day.** Ill effects of heat can quickly overcome the healthiest people, if they perform strenuous work during the warmest parts of the day. Symptoms of dehydration are not easily recognized and are often confused with symptoms of other conditions. Dehydration occurs fast and makes you ill very quickly.
- **Discuss with a physician any concerns about members of the household who are taking medications or have medical conditions that may cause poor blood circulation or reduced ability to tolerate heat.** A physician can advise you about temporary changes to medication or other activities that can relieve the effects of heat.
- **Plan to check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning or who spend much of their time alone.** Elderly persons who live alone or with a working relative might need assistance on hot days. The majority of people who died because of the 1995 Midwest heat wave were persons who were alone.
- **Plan to wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.** Light colors will reflect away the sun's rays more than dark colors, which absorb the sun's rays.
- **Get training.** Take an American Red Cross first aid course to learn how to treat heat emergencies and other emergencies. Everyone should know how to respond, because the effects of heat can happen very quickly.
- **Ensure that your animals' needs for water and shade are met.** Bring companion animals into cooler areas.

What to Do During a Heat Wave

CORE ACTION MESSAGES

- **Never leave a child or pet alone in a vehicle.**
- **Take it easy and stay indoors in excessive heat.**
- **Drink plenty of water and eat lightly.**

During a heat wave, you should:

- **Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or local radio or television stations for up-to-date information.**
- **Never leave children or pets alone in closed vehicles.** Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach more than 140°F (60° C) within minutes. Exposure to such high temperatures can kill in minutes. Even on days that feel pleasantly warm outside, temperatures in a closed vehicle can raise high enough to kill children and pets.
- **Slow down. Avoid strenuous activity.** Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activities. High-risk individuals should stay in cool places. Get plenty of rest to allow your natural "cooling system" to work. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the early morning. Many heat emergencies are experienced by people exercising or working during the hottest part of the day.
- **Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors.** Frequent breaks, especially in a cool area, can help people tolerate heat better.
- **Use a buddy system when working in excessive heat.** Partners can keep an eye on each other and can assist each other when needed. Sometimes exposure to heat can cloud judgment, and, if you work alone, you may not notice this.
- **Watch for signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke.** (See Appendix: How to Recognize and Treat Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke.)