

For more information, visit the Extreme Heat webpage at canada.ca

STAYING HEALTHY *in* the HEAT

KEEP CHILDREN COOL!

Protect Your Child from
EXTREME HEAT



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada

Canada 



For further information or to obtain additional copies,
please contact:

Publications

Health Canada

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Tel.: (613) 954-5995

Fax: (613) 941-5366

E-Mail: hc.publications-publications.sc@canada.ca

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada,
as represented by the Minister of Health, 2020

This publication may be reproduced for personal or
internal use only without permission provided the
source is fully acknowledged.

PDF

Cat. : H144-62/2024E-PDF

ISBN : 978-0-660-73114-8

Pub. : 240478

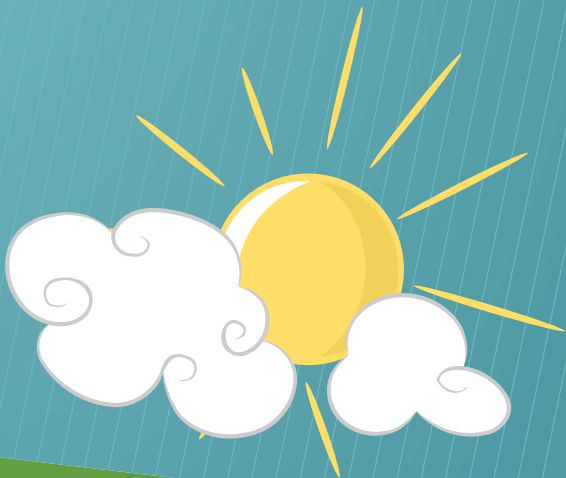


TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Children are at risk
- Prepare for extreme heat
- Watch your child's health closely
- Keep your child hydrated
- Keep your home cool
- Avoid exposing your child to extreme heat

CHILDREN ARE AT RISK

Extreme heat, and heat related illnesses, are especially dangerous for infants and young children.

Heat illnesses include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat fainting, heat edema (swelling of the hands, feet and ankles), heat rash (prickly heat) and heat cramps (muscle cramps). They are mainly caused by over-exposure to heat or over-exertion in the heat, and if not prevented, can lead to long-term health problems and even death.

Children most at risk include those with breathing difficulties (asthma), heart conditions, kidney problems, mental and physical disabilities, developmental disorders, diarrhea, and those who take certain medications. Consult with your family doctor or pharmacist to find out if your child's medication increases their risk of heat related illnesses.



PREPARE FOR EXTREME HEAT



Tune in regularly to local weather forecasts and alerts so you know when to take extra care. You can even get official Government of Canada weather forecasts and alerts straight to your phone by downloading the **WeatherCAN app**.

If you have an air conditioner, make sure it works properly before the hot weather starts. Otherwise, find an air-conditioned spot near you that you can use to cool off during extreme heat.

Learn about ways to keep your home cool during the summer and plan for the future. For example, if you live in a house, plant trees on the side where the sun hits the house during the hottest part of the day.

If you see any of these signs during extreme heat, **immediately** move the child to a cool place and give water.



WATCH YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH CLOSELY

Stay alert for symptoms of heat illness.

They include:



changes in behaviour
(sleepiness or temper tantrums)



dizziness or fainting



nausea or vomiting



headache



rapid breathing and heartbeat



extreme thirst



decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine

If you are breastfeeding your child, breast milk will provide adequate hydration, but remember to keep yourself hydrated so you can produce a sufficient amount of milk.

9-1-1

Heat stroke is a medical emergency! If you are caring for a child who has a high body temperature and is unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating, **call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.**



KEEP YOUR CHILD HYDRATED

Dehydration is dangerous. Give plenty of water to drink **before your child feels thirsty.**

- Make it fun—Leave a colourful glass by the sink and remind your child to drink after every hand washing.
- Make it healthy—Provide extra fruits and vegetables as they have a high water content.
- Make it routine—Encourage your child to drink water before and after physical activity.

WHILE WAITING FOR HELP, cool the child right away by:



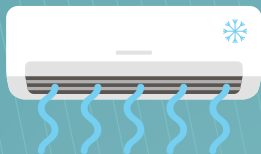
Moving them to a cool place.



Applying cold water to large areas of the skin or clothing.



Fanning the child as much as possible.



KEEP YOUR HOME COOL

- If you have an air conditioner, use it to keep cool.
- Prepare meals that don't need to be cooked in your oven.
- Block the sun by opening awnings and closing curtains or blinds during the day.
- If safe, open your windows at night to let cooler air into your home.

IF YOUR HOME IS EXTREMELY HOT

- **Take a break from the heat** and spend time with your child in a cool place. It could be a tree-shaded area, swimming facility, spray pad or an air-conditioned spot such as a shopping mall, grocery store or public library.
- **Bathe your child in a cool bath** until your child feels refreshed. Always supervise your child in the bath.
- **If using a fan**, keep it at a safe distance from the child and aim the air flow in their direction.

AVOID EXPOSING YOUR CHILD TO EXTREME HEAT

RESCHEDULE OR FIND ALTERNATIVES

Reschedule or plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day.

- Before heading out, check the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) in your area, if available—children are more sensitive to air pollution, which tends to be at higher levels during extreme heat.

If you are in an area with mosquitoes or ticks, protect yourself with insect repellent:

- Use insect repellent that has DEET or icaridin.
- Follow the product instructions.
- For children younger than 12 years old, do not use a DEET product on a daily basis for more than a month.
- For infants younger than 6 months old, do not use an insect repellent containing DEET or Icaridin. Instead, use a mosquito net when babies are outdoors in a crib or stroller.

Never leave children alone in a parked vehicle.

Even on cooler days when the outside temperatures are moderate, the temperature inside a vehicle can be dangerously hot.



AVOID SUN EXPOSURE

- Dress your child in loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing made from a breathable fabric.
- Keep your child in the shade or protected from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed, breathable hat or shade them with an umbrella.
- Tree-shaded areas can be cooler than the surrounding area.
- Limit your time in the sun.
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen that is **SPF30** or higher and follow the product instructions.

Remember, sunscreen will help protect against the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays but not from the heat.

- Ask your health professional about using sunscreens on babies who are under 6 months old.
- Sunscreen and insect repellents can be used safely together. Apply the sunscreen first, then the insect repellent.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Health Canada's "Extreme Heat: Heat Waves"
www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/extreme-heat-heat-waves.html

Health Canada's "Sun Safety Tips for Parents"
www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/sun-safety-tips-parents.html

Health Canada's "Is your child safe?"
www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety/reports-publications/consumer-education/your-child-safe.html

Health Canada and Environment Canada's
"Air Quality Health Index"
www.airhealth.ca

Health Canada's "It's Your Health—Insect Repellents"
www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/about-pesticides/insect-repellents.html



