

Key public health messages on heat

Check on others

- Check on older people or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during hot weather.

Stay hydrated

- Stay hydrated – drink plenty of fluids and avoid excess alcohol.
- If you need to travel, ensure you take water with you.

Physical activity

- Avoid extreme physical exertion. If you can't avoid strenuous outdoor activity, such as sport, DIY or gardening, keep it for cooler parts of the day – for example, in the early morning or evening.

Keeping the home cool

- Keep your environment cool: keeping your living space cool is especially important for those who need to stay at home this summer.
- Shade or cover windows exposed to direct sunlight and keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day. External shutters or shades, if you have them, are very effective, while internal blinds or curtains are less effective. Care should be taken with metal blinds and dark curtains, as these can absorb heat.
- If possible and safe, open windows at night if it feels cooler outside.
- Turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat.
- During the hottest periods find the coolest part of your home or garden/outside or local green space to sit in. If going outdoors, use cool spaces considerately.

On car journeys

- Ensure that babies, children, or older people are not left alone in parked cars, which can quickly overheat.

Look out for the signs of heat-related harm

- If you feel dizzy, weak or have intense thirst and a headache, move to a cool place as soon as possible. Drink some water or diluted fruit juice to rehydrate. Avoid excess alcohol.
- If you have painful muscular spasms (particularly in the legs, arms, or abdomen), rest immediately in a cool place and drink electrolyte drinks. Most people should start to recover within 30 mins and if not, you should seek medical help. Call 111 if you feel unusual symptoms, or if symptoms persist.
- Call 999 if a person develops any signs of heatstroke as this is a medical emergency.

Enjoy the water safely

- During warm weather going for a swim can provide much welcomed relief.
- Take care and follow local safety advice if you are going into the water to cool down.

Sunburn

- Try to keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, when UV radiation is strongest.
- If you have to go out in the heat, wear UV sunglasses, preferably wraparound, to reduce UV exposure to the eyes. Walk in the shade, apply sunscreen of at least SPF15 with UVA protection and wear a hat. Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes. This should reduce the risk of sunburn.