



Extreme Heat Events

The number of summer days over 90°F are increasing in Massachusetts. This causes more heat-related illness and can impact chronic health conditions such as respiratory, cardiovascular, and kidney disease.

Heat and humidity can make our bodies feel hotter and sweat more. This can lead to dehydration, muscle cramps, and fatigue. Other health risks include heat exhaustion and heat stroke with symptoms ranging from discomfort and lack of energy to dizziness and fainting.



Who is at higher risk?

Some people may be more at risk during an extreme heat event because of where they live, their access to official government information, availability of resources to prepare and respond, and whether they already have health problems. These include:

- Children under 5 and people over 65
- Pregnant people
- People working or exercising outdoors
- People of color due to systemic racism
- People who speak little or no English, and who may not receive emergency messages in their native language
- People who live alone
- People without air conditioning
- People with medical conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, and mental illness
- People with disabilities

What can we do about it?

- Stay indoors and out of the sun
- Keep hydrated: Drink more fluids (water or electrolyte replacement drinks) than you usually would even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with alcohol, caffeine, and sugar
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing when outdoors
- Cover windows that get morning or afternoon sun with shades, curtains, or a blanket
- Call 2-1-1 to find cooling centers near you. They might include a local library or community center, or other government building
- Sign up for weather alerts and create a heat emergency plan [like this one](#)
- Ask your doctor how to manage your medications when it is very hot
- Arrange for wellness check-ins, like having a friend, neighbor, or relative call or visit a few times a day
- Plan for power outages if you need electricity for medical equipment or medications