

# Heatwave: Stay safe and healthy

A heatwave is a period of unusually hot weather in an area that lasts 3 days or more. Heat puts stress on our bodies and hot nights make it harder to recover. Heatwaves kill more Australians compared to any other natural disaster.

If you work outdoors, you have a higher risk of prolonged and direct heat exposure during heatwaves. It is important you take steps to reduce your risk of developing heat related illnesses.

## Your checklist to help keep students safe and healthy during a heatwave:

### Stay informed

- Stay up to date on heatwave alerts ([emergency.wa.gov.au](https://www.emergency.wa.gov.au)), listen to the radio and television weather reports.

### Is your health at higher risk?

- Monitor your health, especially if you have acute or chronic medical conditions. Speak to your healthcare practitioner if you feel unwell.
- Continue to take your medication and follow your fluid intake requirements as advised by your healthcare practitioner unless instructed otherwise.
- If your medication has been affected by heat (such as loss of power for a refrigerated item), seek advice from your healthcare practitioner and/or pharmacist.
- If you travel from a cool to a hot region for work, using a structured acclimatisation program can protect your health and improve your work performance.

### Stay in contact

- Know who and when to call for help.
- Identify workplace first-aid procedures.
- Check on coworkers throughout the day.

### Drink plenty of fluids

- Drink plenty of fluids regularly throughout the day – this includes water, diluted juice (mixed with water), and low sugar electrolyte or sports drinks.
- Avoid drinks containing caffeine such as coffee, tea, and caffeinated energy drinks.

### Stay safe outside

- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, and loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Wear a wide brim hat and sunglasses and apply sunscreen. Carry a water bottle with you.
- Cool down by wetting your skin with cool water using a spray bottle or wet cloth.

### Reorganise work

- Rotate jobs and delay tasks to reduce the time you spend in the heat and delay work activities until cooler times of the day, where possible.
- Aim to work in cool areas that are air-conditioned, well-ventilated, or shaded.
- Take additional rest breaks in cool shaded areas.
- Use mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion.



# Know the signs of heat-related illness and act fast



## Dehydration

Feeling thirsty, a dry mouth, and darker urine.



## Treatment

Rest in a cool area, remove excess clothing and drink water.



## Heat stress

Pale skin, excess sweating or no sweating, and dark urine.



## Treatment

Lie in cool area and remove excess clothing. Apply wet cloths, cold water or wrapped icepacks to the skin (armpits and groin) and drink water. Call triple zero (000) if symptoms do not improve in 30 minutes.



## Heat stroke

Confusion, incoherent speech, abnormal walking, seizures or coma.



Heat stroke is a life-threatening medical emergency. Immediately call triple zero (000).

If you or someone you know is ill, contact your regular health care provider or call Healthdirect Australia on 1800 022 222. In an emergency go to your nearest hospital or call triple zero (000).

For more information, visit [healthysa.gov.au](https://www.healthysa.gov.au)

