

Staying cool in a heatwave



What to do to stay safe when it's hot.

We all look forward to a good summer, even though we're often disappointed! But high temperatures and humidity can present a risk to our health, especially as we get older. Here are some helpful tips on how to stay safe when it's hot.

When you're out and about

- Don't spend too much time outside at the hottest time of the day (11am-3pm) when the sun's at its strongest. Try and keep in the shade when you can.
- It's a good idea to carry a bottle of water with you when you go out and about and you could also wear a sun hat.
- Keep an eye on the forecast for any hot weather warnings and to make sure you don't get caught out by unseasonably warm weather.
- Look after your skin – use a sun cream of at least SPF15 and apply it regularly.
- Make sure you don't miss a spot with the sun cream (bald patches tend to be overlooked).
- Be careful, even when it's not sunny. UV levels can still be harmful when it's cloudy out.
- Talk to your optician about prescription sunglasses. Make sure any sunglasses you wear have a CE mark and UV400 label.
- Make sure you get enough vitamin D – you usually get this from short stints in the sun over the spring and summer months.

“I still enjoy the nice weather but I'm much more careful now. On hot days I only stay outside for a little while at a time.”

Eva, 93



When you're at home

- Keep blinds down (especially in rooms you're not using) and windows closed when it's cooler inside than out.
- A damp cloth or a splash of water on the back of your neck is better at cooling you down than a fan.
- Light-coloured, lightweight cotton clothing keeps you cooler.
- Check how you're storing your medication when it gets particularly hot - most should be kept below 25°C so it might be best to keep them in the fridge when it's really hot.
- Check your skin every few months. Be particularly careful of moles. If you notice any changes to the colour or shape, or if they bleed, don't hesitate to go and talk to your doctor.
- Drink plenty to avoid getting dehydrated and feeling lousy, and eat even if you're not feeling too hungry.

Be extra careful

- Watch out for signs of dehydration – confusion, cramps, dark urine and feeling weak. You don't have to feel thirsty to be dehydrated.
- Be careful to avoid heat exhaustion – the symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea and a fast pulse. If you feel unwell, lie down in a cool room, drink plenty of water and cool yourself with a splash of water.
- Heat exhaustion could lead to heatstroke. Symptoms include falling unconscious and seizures. Call 999 immediately if you think you or someone might have heatstroke.
- If you know it's going to be particularly hot and you think you might struggle, ask someone to check on you. Equally, check on someone else you think might struggle in the heat.



What should I do now?

You may want to read some of our other relevant guides, such as:

- **Healthy living**
- **Staying safe**

You can order any of our guides or factsheets by giving our Advice Line a ring for free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

Our friendly advisers will also be able to help answer any questions you have about anything you've read.

All of our publications are available in large print and audio formats.

There's plenty of really useful information on our website, too. Visit **www.ageuk.org.uk/wellbeing** to get started.

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