

Excessive heat and humidity can lead to health complications, especially over a duration of time, up to and including death. In fact, it is the number one weather-related cause of death in the United States for the last three decades.

CDPH recognizes that excessive heat impacts certain people and populations differently, and special attention should be paid to more vulnerable members of society.

Who are the populations most at-risk of heat-related illness and deaths?

- Older adults
- Children
- Pregnant people
- People who do not have air conditioning or the means to pay to run them
- Outdoor workers and emergency responders
- People with pre-existing diseases like heart disease, diabetes, and mental illness
- People experiencing homelessness
- People with disabilities
- People with electricity-dependent medical and assistive equipment

What are the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke?

HEAT EXHAUSTION	HEAT STROKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy sweating • Fast pulse • Nausea or vomiting • Muscle cramps • Tiredness or weakness • Dizziness • Headache • Fainting (passing out) 	<p>All the signs of heat exhaustion; PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High body temperature (104°F or higher) • Neurological symptoms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Confusion » Slurred speech » Seizures » Unconscious/coma • May have lack of sweating



How can I stay safe or help my loved ones stay safe during extreme heat?

- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of water and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sodas.
- Limit outdoor activities and stay inside. If you do not have air conditioning, keep shades drawn and blinds closed, but windows slightly open for air circulation.
- Apply sunscreen and wear loose, light, cotton clothing and brimmed hats if you must spend time outside.
- Take cool baths and showers.
- Never leave anyone (including pets) in a parked car, even for a few minutes.
- Keep electric lights off or turned down.
- Minimize use of your oven and stove.
- Check on relatives and neighbors, including during the evening and nighttime hours.
- Make sure someone you trust has an extra key to your house for emergencies to check on you.
- Ensure access to prescription medications, oxygen, and medical devices ahead of time to avoid going outside during a heat wave.

What should I do if someone nearby is experiencing symptoms of a heat-related health emergency?

- If they are alert and awake, have them drink cold water or ice slowly to rehydrate.
- If they are experiencing neurological symptoms such as confusion or unconsciousness, call 911 and seek a safe and cool indoor location right away.
- If they are vomiting, pass out, or symptoms are worsening or lasting longer than one hour, seek medical attention immediately.
- If you are unable to make contact with someone, request a wellbeing check by downloading the CHI311 app, visiting 311.chicago.gov, or calling 311.



Where can I go to stay safe during extreme heat?

- City cooling centers, libraries, and park district facilities
- Any other indoor air-conditioned public place
- A friend or relative's home that has air conditioning

What is CDPH doing to address extreme heat?

CDPH, along with the Department of Environment, Northwestern University Buffett Institute for Global Affairs Defusing Disasters Working Group, and community partners, conducted Heat Watch 2023, the NOAA Heat Watch Urban Heat Island Mapping Project, on July 28, 2023. While only a one-day snapshot, Heat Watch 2023 reaffirmed what was already suspected and known: the effects of heat are not always felt the same across the City.

Through our continued collaboration with the Defusing Disasters Working Group and other community partners, CDPH is now moving into the next phase of work to develop a community-driven, public health-based Heat Vulnerability Index, which will allow us to identify communities who are vulnerable to heat and inform where we prioritize and allocate resources.

Resources

[Chicago Cooling Centers and Facilities](#)

[Heat Watch 2023](#)

[Northwestern University Buffett Institute for Global Affairs Defusing Disasters Working Group](#)