

Sun Safety

Prevent Heat Strain and Heat Stroke

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends the following ways to prevent heat strain and heat stroke:

- ☀ Keep out of the sun. If your house is cooler than outdoors, stay inside.
- ☀ If you must go outdoors into the sun, shade yourself with an umbrella or a wide-brimmed hat with lots of ventilation (to allow the sweat on your head to evaporate).
- ☀ Drink lots of water (that's the best liquid). How much water you should drink depends on how much you're sweating. It might just be a cup or two an hour, or it may be several litres. Thirstiness is not a good gauge. It doesn't kick in until you've already lost enough water to contribute to heat strain.
- ☀ If it is sunny, keep your house cooler, by pulling down awnings or closing outdoor shutters (if you have them) over your windows, or keep the curtains/blinds closed.
- ☀ If you have a two-storey house, keep the upper-level windows slightly open, to draw excess heat up and out.
- ☀ If your house is hot, try to spend a few hours in an air-conditioned space, such as a mall, or a formal cooling centre. In any case, make sure to rest in cool shade periodically.
- ☀ Take a cool bath or shower.
- ☀ At night, if the outdoor temperature is cooler, open all your windows. If you have fan units that fit into the windows, use them to bring down the temperature faster.
- ☀ Use fans to evaporate sweat from your body and cool it. If the temperature and humidity are both very high, this may not be effective or may have the opposite effect.



- ☀ Limit your physical activity, especially if you are in an at-risk group, and certainly during the middle of the day, when the heat is greatest.
- ☀ Liquids that are high in sugar and/or alcohol should be avoided, as they can increase the amount of water lost by the body.
- ☀ Most people's diets contain enough salt to make up for losses in sweat. But if you experience heat cramps, are advised by your doctor, or have to work in the heat and are sweating a lot you may want to take in extra salt.

If you take medication, check with your doctor or pharmacist for possible side effects during extreme heat.