



# EXTREME HEAT RESPONSE GUIDE



A heat emergency is triggered when the heat index, a measure combining temperature and humidity, is above 100°F for one day or above 95°F for two or more days. However, heat-related illness and death can occur at lower temperatures. In New York City, most heat-related deaths happen inside hot homes. Symptoms of heat illness include hot, dry skin OR cold, clammy skin; confusion; hallucinations; unresponsiveness; nausea or vomiting; trouble breathing; rapid, strong pulse; weakness; or dizziness.



## Know who is at risk.

Some people are at greater risk for health problems from extreme heat. People most likely to be affected by extreme heat include those who do not have a working air conditioner AND:

- Are 65 or older
- Suffer from chronic medical problems such as heart disease, breathing problems, diabetes or obesity
- Have serious mental illness or developmental disabilities
- Take medications that affect the body's ability to maintain a normal temperature. **Check with your doctor for information and advice about any medicines you may be taking.**
- Use drugs or drink heavily
- Are socially isolated, have limited mobility or are unable to leave the house

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- **Get health information from credible sources ([nyc.gov](http://nyc.gov), [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and 311).**
- **Sign up for Notify NYC for information about emergency events.**
- **If you or anyone you know feels overwhelmed or needs help coping, visit [lifenet.nyc](http://lifenet.nyc) for free help in your language.**
- **In an emergency, always call 911.**



## Reach out.

- If you or someone you know has symptoms of heat illness, call 911 or go to a hospital.
- Check on neighbors, friends and relatives who may be at risk and help them find a cool place.



## Stay cool.

- If you have an air conditioner, set it to 78°F to stay cool and save energy. When it is hot outside, it can be even hotter inside!
- If you do not have air conditioning:
  - Go to a public place like a library, mall or cooling center. Even a few hours in an air-conditioned environment can help you stay cooler. Call 311 to find a cooling center near you.
  - Take a shower with lukewarm water to cool off. (If you use cold water, the sudden temperature change could make you dizzy or sick.)
  - Close shades or curtains to block the sun.
  - You may qualify for cooling assistance from the Home Energy Assistance Program, which provides free air conditioners and installation services for people who meet income requirements. Call 311 for more information.
- Drink plenty of water, even if you are not thirsty.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine.



## Be safe outdoors.

- Drink water every 15 minutes.
- Stay in the shade and out of direct sunlight.
- Take frequent rest breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Wear a hat to protect your face and head.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher.
- Limit activity to early morning and late evening.