



Talking Points: Staying Safe and Healthy During Hot Weather

This guide is for those who communicate with the public about health and environmental issues. It explains heat health risks and how to help people most at risk and their caregivers stay safe during hot weather.

What you should know:

- Most New Yorkers receive warnings about heat waves, but some may not understand the dangers. It is important to communicate about who is most at risk and how to prevent heat-related illness and death.
- Heat waves are dangerous. They kill more Americans every year, on average, than any other extreme weather event. Each summer, on average, an estimated 350 New Yorkers die prematurely because of hot weather in NYC.
 - In New York City, most heat stroke deaths occur in homes without air conditioning.
 - Heat kills more people by worsening chronic health conditions than through heat stroke.
 - Extremely hot days are the most dangerous. Hot, but not extreme, days can also be dangerous for those with heat-health risk factors.
- Many at-risk New Yorkers do not have or do not use air conditioning and may stay home in dangerously hot conditions. Without air conditioning, it can get much hotter indoors than outdoors.
- Those most at risk for heat illness include people without access to cooling who are:
 - Adults aged 60 and older
 - People with chronic conditions including heart disease, mental health or cognitive conditions, and a history of diabetes
 - People who use drugs or drink heavily
 - People taking certain medications
- Illnesses and deaths from heat are preventable. Being in an air-conditioned place is the best protection from the heat, especially for those at greatest risk of heat illness.
- Fans alone will not provide enough cooling when it is very hot outside.

What you can do:

- Monitor the weather forecast for upcoming heat waves.
- Use air conditioning to stay cool at home or go to a place that has air conditioning.
 - For those with AC: set the unit to 78° or “low cool” to be safe, comfortable and save money.
 - For those without AC: Find a cool option nearby that has air conditioning. Even with just a few hours of in an air-conditioned space can reduce heat strain. This could be a friend's place, a mall, museum, coffee shop, a library, or a cooling center. Call 311 to find out cooling center locations. Be careful when returning home, if it is still hot indoors. Continue to seek out cool spaces each day as long as it remains hot, and for a few days after if your home is still hot.
- Alert people at risk to talk to their healthcare providers and make a plan to stay safe in the heat.
- Check on family, neighbors and friends to make sure they are safe and cool.
 - Encourage them to use their air conditioning or help them get to a cool place.
 - Make sure they are drinking plenty of water.
 - Be alert for [signs of heat illness](#), and call 911 immediately if someone shows these signs.

For more information:

- [More information and resources on heat illness, NYC Health Department](#)
- [Locations of NYC Cooling Centers](#) (open only during heating emergencies), NYC Office of Emergency Management
- [Beat the Heat, NYC Emergency Management](#)
- [National Weather Service](#)