

Heat waves

**ARE
DEADLY
SERIOUS...**

Be cautious!



Québec 

How does heat affect our health?



In the summer, the sun and beautiful weather are great sources of enjoyment... However, when the heat is too extreme, it is stressful to the body. Several organs, including the heart, have to work harder to resist the heat.

The effects of heat on health are more serious:

- During the first heat waves, since the body is not used to high temperatures
- If the heat lasts for several days, or nights stay hot
- When it is very humid and there is no wind
- If you live downtown, where the heat is more intense
- If you do not have air-conditioning in your home

Indirect effects:

The most common effects of heat on health are indirect. They are associated with worsening of symptoms in people who are already sick.

Direct effects:

Although quite rare, the direct effects of heat are **cramps**, **heat exhaustion** and **heatstroke**. These effects can occur among people who are already sick or among healthy people who do strenuous physical activity in spite of the heat.

In case of heat stroke (elevated body temperature, confusion), emergency medical treatment is required. For heat cramps or heat exhaustion, rest in a cool place and drink water or a water-diluted sports beverage. If symptoms worsen or last more than an hour, consult a doctor.

Additional preventive measures for people who are at higher risk

People at risk		Preventive measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Elderly people suffering from chronic cardiovascular, cerebrovascular, respiratory, kidney, or neurological diseases or diabetes ■ People taking medications such as tranquilisers, diuretics or anti-cholinergics <p>CAUTION!</p> <p>People at risk who live alone are twice as vulnerable during extreme heat waves.</p>		<p>1. To better prepare yourself for heat waves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Stock up on water and sports beverages ■ Find a cool place to rest, in case the need arises. ■ Identify someone who can be contacted daily, in case there is a problem ■ Keep the Info-Santé telephone number within easy reach (see back of the pamphlet) <p>2. During heat waves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be proactive by following basic preventive measures before you feel the effects of heat ■ During hot nights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find a cool place to sleep - If this is not possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep with the windows open • Keep some water by the bed • Do not hesitate to have something to drink, or take a shower or bath during the night • To cool off, use a damp cloth ■ Pay attention to your state of health. In case of general malaise, dizziness, fatigue, head ache, difficulty breathing, chest pain or swollen legs, contact Info-Santé or your doctor. ■ Discuss with your doctor any changes that might be required to your medication or to your medical follow-up. This is especially important for people with the following medical problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heart failure - Patients on dialysis - Loss of fluids due to gastrointestinal problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Young children (0 to 4 years of age) 		<p>Parents should make sure that their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drink plenty of fluids ■ Take cool baths more often ■ Wear lightweight clothing ■ Are never left alone in a car
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ People who take part in strenuous activity (jogging, bicycling, etc.) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reduce the intensity of activity ■ Practice the activity earlier in the morning ■ Drink sports beverage diluted with water
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Construction workers (or other outdoor manual labour) or people who work in places where heat is emitted through industrial processes (foundries, bakeries, dry cleaners, etc.) 		<p>Get a copy of the pamphlet "Attention au coup de chaleur" available in French in all CSST regional offices</p>

Keep an eye on others!

During heat waves, we need to pay special attention to those around us who are most at risk. The following people may be unable to take protective measures without someone's help, especially if they live alone:

- People with mental disorders
- Disabled people
- Elderly people with chronic diseases
- People who take tranquillisers, diuretics or anti-cholinergics

Whether somebody is a neighbour, a relative or a friend, do not hesitate to call or knock on the door of anyone around you who is at risk and offer them a hand.



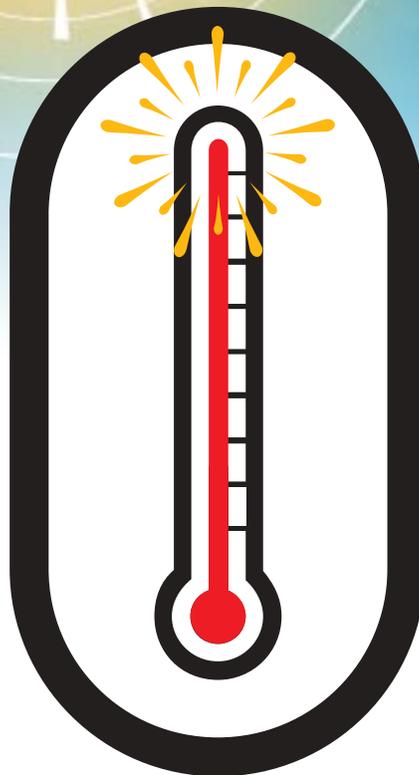
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Basic preventive measures



- Drink plenty of fluids even before you feel thirsty, unless contraindicated
- Avoid drinks that contain alcohol, caffeine or large amounts of sugar (coffee, tea, colas) since they cause you to lose body fluids
- Stay in a cool or air-conditioned place, or in the shade
- Avoid strenuous activities
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing lightweight, light-coloured clothing and a hat
- Take a cool shower or bath as often as necessary
- Use an air-conditioner to cool your home or spend a few hours in an air-conditioned place

When does heat become extreme?



30°C / 40°C

ENVIRONMENT CANADA ISSUES EXTREME HOT WEATHER AND HUMIDITY WARNINGS WHEN THEY PREDICT:

- The temperature will be 30°C or higher
- The humidex level (temperature and relative humidity combined) will be 40°C or higher

Questions ?

If it is very hot and you have questions about your health or someone else's, call your doctor or the Info-Santé service at your CLSC.

Info-Santé CLSC
24-hour telephone service, 7 days a week

or

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/infosanteclsc

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Québec 

• Agence de développement de réseaux locaux de services de santé et de services sociaux de Montréal
• Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux