



## HEAT ILLNESSES: How to Prevent Them

### There are three keys to preventing heat illnesses:

1. **Staying informed** about heat/the weather so that you know when to take action to protect your health.
2. **Staying hydrated** to decrease the risk of heat illnesses occurring (e.g., heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke).
3. **Staying cool** to decrease the risk of heat illnesses occurring (e.g., heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke).

#### STAYING INFORMED:

##### Connect with the National Weather Service (NWS) Office in San Diego:

Website: [www.weather.gov/sgx](http://www.weather.gov/sgx)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NWSSanDiego/](https://www.facebook.com/NWSSanDiego/)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/NWSSanDiego](https://www.twitter.com/NWSSanDiego)

##### Sign up for emergency alerts:

AlertSanDiego: [www.readysandiego.org/alertsandiego/](http://www.readysandiego.org/alertsandiego/)

##### Download emergency apps:

(from the App Store or Google Play)

- SD (San Diego) Emergency App
- OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool App

#### STAYING HYDRATED:

Be careful about what you drink. Not all drinks are hydrating:

- Water and sports drinks
- Sugary drinks
- Alcoholic drinks

- Don't wait until you're thirsty!
- Drink extra fluids starting early and throughout the day.

#### STAYING COOL:

You can help your body stay cool by modifying:

- What you wear
- What you do
- Where you go
- How you get there

##### What to wear:

- Lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothing
  - Cotton, linen, and jersey are more breathable and help the body release heat
  - Polyester, nylon, and acrylic can actually trap heat
- A brimmed hat (or baseball cap)

- A bandana or scarf dipped in cold water
- If you have long hair, tie it up
- Use an umbrella for shade or a handheld fan

##### What to do:

*Low cost:*

- Open windows to create a cross breeze
- Turn off the lights or use them less
- Use the oven/stove less
- Take a cool shower
- Use light cotton pillowcase and sheets (no blankets/comforters) and put them in a plastic bag in the freezer before bed
- Run ceiling fans counterclockwise
- Freeze water bottles or ice packs to place behind neck, under knees, etc.
- Eat cool foods (avoid hot and heavy meals)



## MODULE 4: HEAT ILLNESSES: How to Prevent Them CONTINUED

### Mid cost:

- Close blinds or use heat reducing window film or blackout curtains
- Insulate water heater with a “tank cover”
- Apply door and window weather proofing
- Add shade awnings on windows, balconies, patios
- Run air-conditioner or evaporative cooler
- Install door sweeps
- Use an outward-facing window fan on the warm side of a building to blow hot air out; use an inward-facing fan on the cool side of a building to draw cool air in



### Higher cost:

- Install storm windows
- Install insulation
- Install a cool roof
- Install hard flooring
- Create cool walls
- Plant vegetation, especially on the South or West side of a building



### Where to go:

- If you can, go to an air-conditioned place:
  - Cooling centers and other public places, like shopping malls, libraries, coffee shops, and swimming pools
- If you must be outdoors:
  - Move into the shade if possible (including at the beach!)
  - Pace yourself and take breaks
  - Know that a child in a stroller can easily overheat



### How to get there:

- If you travel by car:
  - Minimize time sitting in hot cars (put a towel on the seat to avoid burns)
  - Do not leave children or pets in hot cars (remember to check the back seat!)
  - Use sunshades in windows when parked
- If you use public transportation:
  - Look for a shady route to the bus stop
  - Consider using an umbrella for shade or a handheld fan
  - Remember to bring extra water (more than you need!)