

Heatwave information for service providers

Before and during a heatwave, it is important to remind people of the risks posed to human health and what can be done to reduce these risks.

Heatwaves can affect anybody, including the young and healthy, but there are certain population groups more at risk than others.

Those most at risk in a heatwave are:

- people **aged over 65 years**, especially those living alone
- people who have a **medical condition** such as diabetes, kidney disease or mental illness
- people **taking medications** that may affect the way the body reacts to heat such as:
 - allergy medicines (antihistamines)
 - blood pressure and heart medicines (beta-blockers)
 - seizure medicines (anticonvulsants)
 - water pills (diuretics)
 - antidepressants or antipsychotics
- people with **problematic alcohol** or other drug use
- people with **a disability** who may not be able to identify or communicate their discomfort or thirst
- people who have trouble moving around (such as those who are **bed bound** or in **wheelchairs**)
- people who are **overweight or obese**
- pregnant women, **breastfeeding** mothers, **babies** and **young children**
- people who work or are physically **active outdoors**.

The Department of Health's heatwave resources can be distributed to callers or clients in the days prior to a heatwave. These resources include a brochure, information sheet and poster, which are also available in other languages.

The key to staying healthy in the heat is to keep cool and stay hydrated.



Telephone script template for service providers

This telephone script template has been prepared for use by service providers who are talking to people who may be at increased risk of heat-related illness during a heatwave. The purpose of this script during or prior to a heatwave is to remind people to: **✔ Keep cool. ✔ Drink plenty of water. ✔ Seek medical advice if they feel unwell.**

You may adapt this script for your service, for example, adding contact details for local support services.

Key message

Lead question/statement

Keep cool	Are you in a cool place?
	Yes ▼ No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay indoors and close your curtains and blinds to block out the sun If you have an air-conditioner please keep it on, making sure it is set to cool Wear light, loose-fitting clothes and remove unnecessary clothing Limit physical activity and avoid doing anything strenuous such as gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try to spend as much time as possible in cool or air-conditioned buildings, such as shopping centres If you have an air-conditioner please turn it on, making sure it is set to cool Stay indoors and close your curtains and blinds to block out the sun Wear light, loose-fitting clothes and take off any unnecessary clothing Keep yourself cool by using wet towels, putting your feet in cool water or taking cool (not cold) showers Limit physical activity and avoid doing anything strenuous such as gardening
Keep hydrated	It is important to stay hydrated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty (if your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather) If you must go out, stay in the shade and take plenty of water with you Eat smaller meals more often and eat cold meals such as salads 	
Get assistance/ Keep in touch	Do you have someone who can help you with errands and other appointments in hot weather?
	Yes ▼ No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make contact with them and ask for their assistance to stay out of the heat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan or re-arrange errands and appointments so that you can stay out of the heat
Get medical help	If you feel unwell during the heat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please telephone your usual medical help/health care service For 24-hour health advice contact NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24 In an emergency please dial 000 	

Note: If a caller expresses any concern for their welfare implement your agency's standard referral or emergency protocols.

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