

Keeping clients safe in the heat

Severe heat can be dangerous and can even prove fatal in some cases.

As a provider of services, you will need to ensure that the people you support and care for are protected from the effects of hot weather.

Some people are more vulnerable to hot weather than others. Some of the factors that increase people's risk include, but are not limited to, age, chronic or severe illness, some medications and those who are unable to adapt their behaviour to keep cool.

Be prepared!

To help your service prepare for periods of hot weather you should;

- Register for Heat Health Alerts [Heat Health Alert Service](#)
- Consider which of your clients may be at risk (ask primary care staff if unsure) and document it in their care plan
- [Download the government action cards.](#)

Clients

Ensure that you have protocols to monitor those clients who are most at risk and to provide them with additional care and support.

- Check body temperature, heart and breathing rates, blood pressure and hydration levels
- Watch for any changes in behaviour, especially excessive drowsiness
- Watch for signs of headache, unusual tiredness, weakness, giddiness, disorientation or sleeping problems
- A damp cloth on the back of the neck helps with temperature regulation
- Discourage clients from physical activity and going out during the hottest part of the day (11am to 3pm)
- Apply sun cream every two hours if clients are outside.

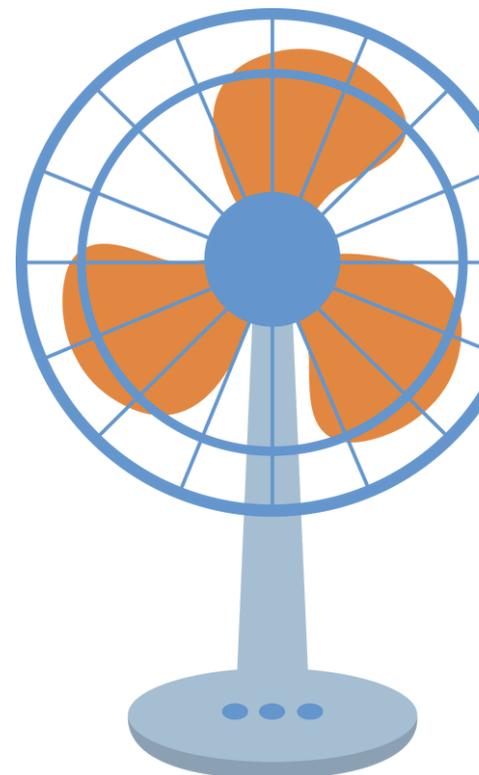


Environment

- Monitor and record indoor temperatures
- Keep curtains closed especially in rooms when the sunlight comes through
- Be aware plastic pads and mattresses can be particularly hot during a hotter weather
- Create cool rooms and cool areas that are 26c or below
- Once the temperature outside has dropped lower than the temperature inside, open the windows - this may not be until very late at night or the early hours of the morning
- Turn off unnecessary electrical equipment and lighting
- Increase outside shading with shutters, gazebos, shaded areas, trees or leafy plants. Increasing outside greenery aids cooling

Electric fan usage

- Do not aim fans directly at the body
- Keep a good distance away from the body
- Ensure the person has regular access to drinks, as fans can cause dehydration
- Ensure fans are kept clean as part of a regular cleaning schedule
- During an infectious illness outbreak seek advice from IPC colleagues about fan use



Clothing

- Ensure your clients have light, loose fitting clothing to wear
- Hats should be worn outside and shade the face, neck, and ears.

Food and water

- Ensure clients and staff are able to have cold drinks regularly
- Monitor client's fluid intake particularly if they are not able to drink unaided
- Consider plans to adapt to cold meals that have high water content such as salads.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and hot drinks.



Staff health and wellbeing

- Ensure you have enough staff and contingency plans are in place
- Ensure that your staff keep hydrated throughout the day
- Look at staff uniform and make any changes to keep staff cool and covered, particularly when outside

Warm weather health issues

- dehydration
- heat exhaustion and heatstroke
- sunburn

If you suspect someone has heat stroke then dial 999.

More information

For more in-depth information for care managers and staff on caring for vulnerable people during hot weather [visit the webpages here.](#)

The [Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) aims to protect individuals and communities from the health effects of adverse weather and to build community resilience.