



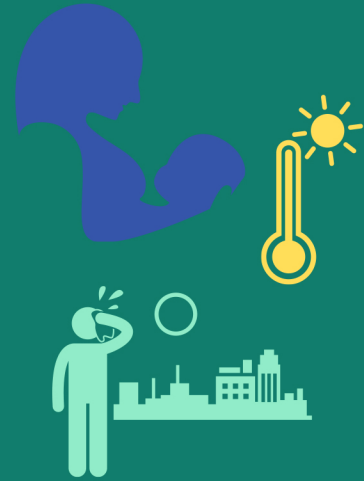
What is a Heatwave?

- Extremely high temperatures that last for several days or weeks.
- Environment Canada releases warnings whenever a particular region is suffering a heatwave, stay alert to the news and weather channels.
- With climate change, increased temperatures are expected to become more common and last for longer periods of time.

Who is at Risk?

Everyone can experience the effects of heat but children, the elderly, people working outdoors and homeless people are at greater risk. Among children, very young children and newborns are most vulnerable.

Urban areas may be warmer than surrounding areas and rural areas may have limited resources to cope with heat.



How Heat Affects Children's Health

Children have a higher metabolic rate, larger skin area, and are generally more active than adults. This causes children to breathe more quickly and need more water to drink. When exposed to high temperatures, children may lose large amounts of water through sweating which helps keep them cool but also places them at risk for dehydration and their body temperature can rise. This may affect their sense of thirst and they might not drink enough fluids.



- Heat illness in children can result in heat stroke, exhaustion, fainting, swelling of the hands, feet and ankles, heat rash and muscle cramps.
- Heat illness is caused by over-exposure to heat or being super active in the heat.
- If not prevented, heat illness can lead to long-term health problems and even death.



Keeping Your Child Safe

A child's body temperature rises faster than adults and can cause heatstroke quickly, which can lead to organ damage and even death.

Symptoms of heat illness include:

- changes in behaviour (sleepiness or temper or tantrums)
- dizziness or fainting
- nausea or vomiting
- headache
- quick breathing and heartbeat
- extreme thirst

If you see any of the above symptoms during extreme heat, immediately move the child to a cool place and give them water. If you are breastfeeding your child, remember to keep yourself hydrated so you can produce enough milk. Apply cold water to their skin or clothing and fan the child as much as possible.

* Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately if a child has a high body temperature and is unconscious, confused or has stopped sweating. Heat stroke is a medical emergency! *



Preventing Heat Illness

- Watch the news for heat warnings
- Never leave a child alone in a vehicle
- Keep your home cool
- Avoid overexposure to heat and sun
- Keep water near you
- Avoid excessive exercise or activity
- Move to cooler and shady places when outdoors on hot days

If outdoors check the Air Quality Health Index since air pollution can worsen with excessive heat, apply sunscreen and wear a hat.

For more information:

- **Health Canada. Keep Children Cool!**
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/sc-hc/H128-1-10-630-eng.pdf
- **Government of Canada. Extreme Heatwaves.**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/sun-safety/extreme-heat-heat-waves.html>
- **Government of Canada. Public Weather Alerts for Canada**
https://weather.gc.ca/warnings/index_e.html
- **Canada Safety Council. Hot Car Warning: Child Safety.**
<https://canadasafetycouncil.org/hot-car-warning/>
- **WeatherCAN App. Government of Canada.**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/weather-general-tools-resources/weathercan.html>
- **Air Quality Health Index App. Government of Canada.**
https://weather.gc.ca/airquality/pages/index_e.html
- **Lancet Countdown 2018 Video -Explaining Heat Stress.** <https://cape.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Video-Explaining-Heat-Stress.mp4>
- **Contact the Children's Environmental Health Clinic (CHEHC):**
Website: www.chehc.ca
Phone: 780-735-2443

