



A Guide to Staying Safe in a Heatwave

Stay safe in a heatwave

A heatwave is three or more days of extremely hot weather that can impact human health, animals, plants and infrastructure.

Many people don't realise that heatwaves aren't just uncomfortable, they can be deadly.

Seasons will always vary from one year to the next. The long term climate warming trend means that overall we are experiencing more extremely hot days and heatwaves than before, and more people and pets could suffer from heat stress.

Heatwaves can worsen existing medical conditions but anyone can be affected by heat. Some factors that can put people at higher risk of heat stress include:

- Aged over 65
- Taking multiple medications
- Pregnant or breastfeeding
- Overweight
- Outdoor workers
- Sports people

Heatwaves also increase the risk of electricity blackouts, water outages and bushfire.



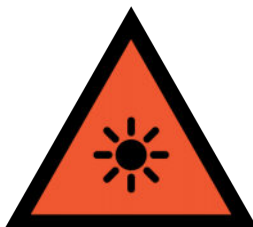
Heatwave alerts

Heatwave alerts and warnings are based on weather conditions. You can find warnings about heatwaves, bushfires and other hazards and emergencies online at www.emergency.wa.gov.au



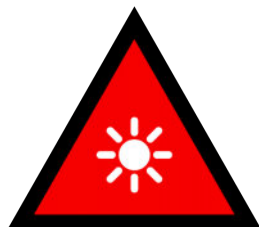
**Heatwave
Advice**

A severe heatwave is forecast in the coming days. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



**Heatwave
Watch and Act**

A severe heatwave is occurring. Conditions are changing and you need to take action now to protect yourself and your family.



**Heatwave
Emergency**

An extreme heatwave is occurring. Heatwave impacts are increasing. You need to take action immediately to protect yourself and your family.



Prepare to stay cool

In a heatwave you are at higher risk of serious dehydration, heat stress and heat stroke. If there is a heatwave warning you can take steps to reduce your exposure to the heat:

- ✓ Reschedule outdoor work and sports
- ✓ Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are concerned about your risk factors or the medicines you are taking
- ✓ Buy groceries and pick up medicines beforehand so you don't have to go out in the heat
- ✓ Check fans and air conditioners are working and set to cool
- ✓ Close windows, curtains and blinds and shade west-facing windows from the afternoon sun
- ✓ Fill extra bottles of water in case of a water outage (limit tea, coffee and alcohol as they can make dehydration worse)
- ✓ Keep phones and laptops charged - heatwaves make blackouts more likely, and can delay work to restore power
- ✓ If you have no air conditioning or there is a blackout, consider spending a few hours in cool refuges like libraries and shopping centres



Keeping pets safe in the heat

Animals will also be affected by extreme heat. Bring pets inside or make sure they have plenty of shade and water. Don't leave them shut in a closed shed, garage or vehicle.

Keep in contact

Stay in touch with family, friends and neighbours so you can take care of each other if needed. If you get worried about your health you can contact your doctor or pharmacist or phone HealthDirect on 1800 022 222 to talk to a nurse.

Bushfire risk

Heatwave conditions will increase bushfire risk. Activities that could start a fire will be restricted in a total fire ban or Harvest and Vehicle Movement ban. Check for bushfire warnings and follow your household bushfire plan.



Heatwaves and waterwise gardens

Shady trees, garden beds and real lawns can cool the local area and counteract the urban heat island effect (but not fake grass which gets very hot). In a heatwave, some extra watering can save your garden and help cool down around your house. Waterwise native plants will handle the hot conditions better but may still need some extra care.

You can hand-water any day of the week using a watering can or hose with a spray nozzle. Watering before 9am or after 6pm means the plants have more chance to absorb the water before it evaporates and you will not be out in the heat of the day.

If more delicate plants die off after a heatwave, consider hardier replacements. Nurseries have more drought tolerant options and Water Corporation has a list of Waterwise plants online at www.watercorporation.com.au.

The Shire has free booklets available that can help you choose local native plants. Avoid weedy Eastern States wattles that add to bushfire risk, and large cacti like Prickly Pear which is a Declared Pest Plant in WA.

For more information

Your doctor can advise on your personal risk factors and appropriate precautions for you. You can also ask your doctor or pharmacist about a Medicines Review if you are taking multiple medications.

WA Department of Health has lots more information about preparing for heatwaves on their website.

www.healthywa.wa.gov.au

HealthDirect service has information online about how to handle a heatwave, or phone for advice on 1800 022 222.

www.healthdirect.gov.au

Department of Fire and Emergency Services online tool 'My Bushfire Plan' can help your household prepare.

www.dfes.wa.gov.au

Red Cross Australia 'RediPlan' tool can help you list important information and plan for any kind of emergency.

www.redcross.org.au/prepare

Bureau of Meteorology provides heatwave forecasts and monitoring, as well as seasonal and climate forecasts.

www.bom.gov.au/australia/heatwave

To understand more about the science of climate change, visit the CSIRO Climate Science Centre website.

www.csiro.au/en/research/environmental-impacts/climate-change



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