



HEATWAVE

What is it?

The Bureau of Meteorology defines a heatwave as three days or more of high maximum and minimum temperatures that is unusual for that location.

What are the local risks?

Every location across Australia has its own unique climatology of heat. The bulk of heatwaves at each location are low intensity, with local communities expected to have adequate adaptation strategies for this level of thermal stress. Less frequent, higher intensity heatwaves are classified as severe and will challenge some adaptation strategies, especially for vulnerable sectors, such as aged or the chronically ill. Even rarer and exceptionally intense heatwaves are classed as extreme and will challenge many normally reliable sectors, including power and transport infrastructure and anyone who does not adopt protective adaptation strategies.

What should I do?

It is prudent to prepare and modify your behaviour when extreme heat occurs.

Drink water regularly

- Ensure that you drink at least two to three litres of water a day at regular intervals. even if you do not feel thirsty. If your fluid intake is limited on medical advice, ask your doctor how much you should drink during hot weather.
- Don't drink alcohol, soft drinks, tea or coffee - they worsen dehydration.
- Eat as you normally would but do try to eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit.
- Avoid heavy protein foods (such as meat, dairy products) which raise body heat and increase fluid loss.

Keep out of the heat as much as possible

- Plan your day to keep activity to a minimum during the hottest part of the day.
- If you can, avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11am to 3pm).
- Avoid strenuous activities and gardening.
- Do not leave children, adults or animals in parked cars.

If you go out

- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose, porous clothes.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen.
- Regularly rest in the shade.
- Drink plenty of water.

Stay as cool as possible

- Wear appropriate clothing to suit the hot weather.
- Stay inside in the coolest rooms in your home.
- Block out the sun during the day by closing curtains and blinds and keep windows closed while the room is cooler than it is outside.
- Open up windows and doors when there is a cool breeze, when the temperature inside rises and at night for ventilation.
- Use fans and air-conditioners at home to keep cool, or spend time in an air-conditioned library, community centre, shopping centre or cinema.

- Take frequent cool showers or baths and splash yourself several times a day with cold water, particularly your face and the back of your neck.

Look after your animals

Animals can also be affected by heat-related illness. If you're in charge of an animal, you have a duty of care to provide it with food, water and appropriate shelter.

Caring for children in heat

Babies and young children are more susceptible to heat-related illness than adults because their bodies cannot easily adapt to changing temperatures.

For information on who is at risk, how you can prepare for and cope during a heat event and what to do for heat-related illnesses, please visit

qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/heatwave

(Information provided by Queensland Health)

USEFUL LINKS:

Queensland Health

qld.gov.au/emergency/dealing-disasters/heatwave

Bureau of Meteorology

bom.gov.au/australia/heatwave/about.shtml

