

Amber Heat Health Alert

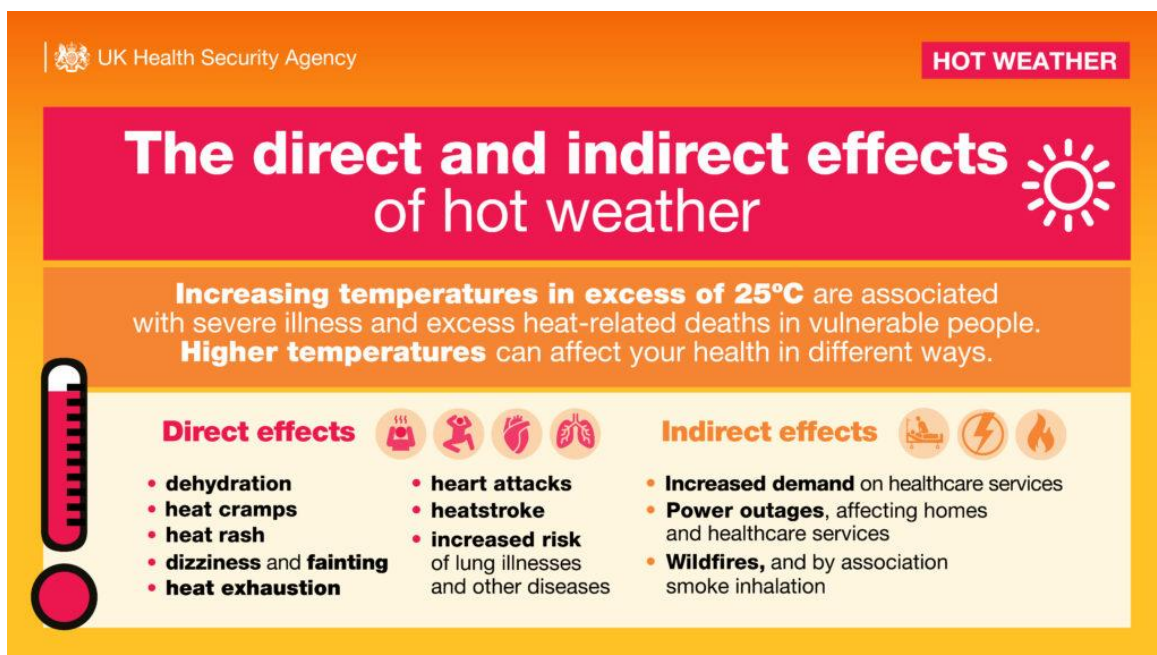
Targeted information for Frontline Workers, Volunteers, Parents and Carers of Babies and Young Children

WHAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED?

An **Amber Heat-Health Alert** has been announced. This means we are expecting a period of high heat that is likely to impact all of us. We all need to consider how to stay safe and comfortable, but this is particularly important for babies and young children who are more vulnerable during periods of hot weather due to their physiology, behaviour, and activity levels. Children below the age of 4, those with complex health conditions, or taking particular medications are at even greater risk. Some staff members may also be more vulnerable to the impacts of hot weather. We hope to help you think about the extra assistance babies, and young children need to stay safe during an **Amber Alert**.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Hot weather can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, and direct sun exposure can cause sunburn. It can also influence mental health and behaviour. Some medications can make dehydration worse, or limit the body's ability to adapt to heat.



UK Health Security Agency

HOT WEATHER

The direct and indirect effects of hot weather

Increasing temperatures in excess of 25°C are associated with severe illness and excess heat-related deaths in vulnerable people. Higher temperatures can affect your health in different ways.

| Direct effects | Indirect effects |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dehydration • heat cramps • heat rash • dizziness and fainting • heat exhaustion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heart attacks • heatstroke • increased risk of lung illnesses and other diseases • Increased demand on healthcare services • Power outages, affecting homes and healthcare services • Wildfires, and by association smoke inhalation |

HOW CAN WE STAY SAFE?

With sensible precautions the risk of negative impacts can be reduced - the following checklist can help keep you, your colleagues, families, and the children you care for safe during an **Amber Alert**. We have broken information into actions designed for keeping **places** cool and actions designed for keeping **people** cool.



Cool Places:

- Maximum temperature = **26°C**
- Ensure **thermometers** are working, accessible and regularly monitored
- Ensure **heating system** is turned off
- Turn off **lights and electrical equipment** when not required
- Think about **passive cooling** methods first (things that don't require extra energy/power):
 - **During the day** - close windows, curtains, blinds or shutters in rooms that face the sun where this doesn't compromise air quality
 - **During the night/early morning** (where safe to do so) - open windows to increase natural ventilation
- Think about **active cooling** methods second (things that require extra energy/power to run):
 - Use **fans** if temperature is below 35°C (avoid aiming directly at the body which can lead to dehydration)
 - **Air conditioning** is a useful cooling aid but has its downsides - use sparingly, when other measures are insufficient
- Identify designated "**cool spaces**" (areas/rooms kept below 26°C) and prioritise these if the facility as a whole cannot be kept cool



Cool People:

- avoid direct sun exposure by encouraging use of indoor or outdoor "cool spaces" - particularly in the hottest hours (11am to 3pm)
- limit time in small enclosed spaces such as vehicles or glasshouses - ensure good ventilation and airflow if this cannot be avoided
- plan outdoor breaks and physical activity at cooler times of the day (pre 11am, post-3pm) and limit vigorous exercise in unshaded locations
- where possible use classrooms and spaces less likely to overheat, or adjust room layout to avoid sitting in direct sunlight for prolonged periods
- if an area cannot be kept below 26°C, move to a designated "cool space"
- if outside choose shady, greener locations where there is good air movement
- if travelling, plan journeys to avoid the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm), seek shade when able, and carry a refillable water bottle - find you nearest place to refill here <https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-bradford-district/>
- wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen (SPF 30, 4/5stars UVA protection, reapplied regularly) if sun exposure cannot be avoided
- **wear long, loose, light-weight and light-coloured clothing (for staff and children) uniform rules should be adjusted to facilitate comfort and safety**
- stay hydrated - drinking cold water regularly throughout the day, or alternatives such as ice lollies or water-rich foods
- minimise caffeine intake - this can worsen dehydration
- check medications temperature requirements and ensure safe storage

- review, prioritise and monitor those who have additional vulnerabilities, checking individual risk assessments for specific needs e.g. those:
 - less able to adjust their behaviour or routines without encouragement or assistance
 - with health conditions or identified as clinically vulnerable
 - taking medications that change the body's response to heat or increase risk of dehydration
 - who are acutely unwell e.g. experiencing an episode of diarrhoea and vomiting
 - those with alcohol or drug dependence
 - those with social vulnerability
 - those who may be fasting



Recognising the signs that someone could be overheating:

- 1) **Heat stress + dehydration** - Irritable behaviour, discomfort, worse with activity. Dark urine, dry nappies. Can lead to heat exhaustion/heatstroke. Cool and rehydrate.
- 2) **Heat exhaustion** - tiredness, dizziness, headaches, nausea, vomiting, sweating ++, pale, clammy skin. Cool the person urgently, seek medical assistance if no improvement.
- 3) **Heatstroke (body is now unable to cool itself down)** - confusion, poor co-ordination, seizures, loss of consciousness, temp >40, red hot skin (sweat or dry), fast heartbeat, shallow breathing, diarrhoea. **This is a medical emergency. Call 999.**

Signs and symptoms to look out for:

- Tiredness
- weakness
- dizziness
- headache
- feeling sick or being sick
- excessive sweating
- skin becoming pale, clammy or development of a heat rash - these changes can be less apparent on brown and black skin
- cramps in the arms, legs, and stomach
- fast breathing or heartbeat
- a high temperature
- being very thirsty
- confusion
- irritability



How to cool down:

- **move somewhere cooler** e.g. a room with fans, air conditioning or somewhere in the shade
- **remove unnecessary clothing** e.g. a jacket or socks

- **re-hydrate** e.g. drink cool water, a sports or rehydration drink, or eat cold and water rich foods like ice-lollies
- **apply cool water** by spray or sponge to exposed skin, or using cold packs wrapped in a cloth under the armpits or on the neck, or placing hands/feet in cool water can also help.

If symptoms don't improve after 30 minutes, or get worse at any time, seek medical advice or assistance promptly.



Staying in the Loop:

Be sure you're signed up for UKHSA Heat-Health Weather alerts:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/heat-health-alert-service>

You can find key information/resources on the impacts of hot weather and actions you should take to prepare and respond here:

[Looking after children and those in early years settings before and during hot weather: teachers and other educational professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Adverse Weather and Health Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Heat exhaustion and heatstroke - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Beat the heat: hot weather advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) - includes easy read, British Sign Language and other translations

[Sunscreen and sun safety - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

[Temperature in the workplace \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)