HEAT TOOL KIT FOR

Behavioral Health

Extreme heat is a period of unusually high heat and humidity that can be dangerous to health. In New Jersey, extreme heat events are expected to become more frequent and last longer. This guide will help you learn about how heat impacts those with behavioral health needs, along with tips and resources to stay safe during hot weather.

Extreme heat can contribute to psychological distress. During extreme heat events, possible behavioral health effects include:

Increased mental health stressors such as grief, worry, and anxiety

Worsening of pre-existing behavioral health conditions

Increased rates of psychiatric emergencies

Increased medical risks
especially for those with disorders such as schizophrenia and mood disorders

Increased risk of substance use and relapse

Cognitive impairment and "brain fog"

Increased irritability and aggression

Increased suicide risk

These effects may linger for days after the extreme heat event.

*NOTE: ALWAYS CHECK WITH A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER FOR ADVICE SPECIFIC TO YOUR SITUATION.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Anyone experiencing severe emotional distress or suicidal ideation should call, text, or chat with the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Certain psychiatric medications may change your body's response to heat. See the Summer Heat and Sun Risks When Taking Psychiatric Medications flyer on page 3 for more information.

Resource List

NJ 211

NJ 211 connects New Jerseyans with necessary health and human services. Services include housing, utilities, income, food, health, legal services, substance disorders, and children and family services. NJ 211 can be contacted via phone, email, chat and text. The hotline is available at all hours of the day.

To call: dial 2-1-1

To contact via text: text your zip code to 898-211

To contact via email: info@nj211.org

To chat: visit nj211.org

Cooling Centers

During extreme heat, you can visit a cooling center to get relief from hot weather. For an updated list of cooling centers near you, call or text NJ 2-1-1, or visit Chill Out NJ to look up other places in NJ to get stay cool. You can also visit public places like libraries, community centers, and museums to get relief from heat.

Home Energy Assistance Hotline

The Home Energy Assistance Hotline helps low-income families across New Jersey with heating and cooling related bills. The hotline is available Monday-Friday from 8AM to 8PM.

Hotline number: 1-800-510-3102 or dial 2-1-1

To learn more about your eligibility for Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) benefits visit:

https://nj211.org/initiative/home-energy-assistance-hotline

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

If you or a loved one is suffering from a mental health or substance use related crisis, call or text 9-8-8. Trained counselors are available for free, confidential support.

New Jersey Office of Emergency Management

For more information on weather-related emergencies visit the NJ Office of Emergency Management website: www.ready.nj.gov

NJ Register Ready

Register Ready is New Jersey's special needs registry. This resource allows residents with disabilities to share information with emergency response agencies to be better served during emergencies. Registered participants can be notified when evacuations have been ordered.

Register online at: www.registerready.nj.gov

For assistance in registration dial 2-1-1

NJ Shares

NJ Shares is a nonprofit organization that provides assistance in paying for energy, telephone, internet and water bills for income-eligible individuals.

For more information on whether you are eligible visit: www.njshares.org or call 866-657-4273

Heat Hub NJ

Heat Hub NJ is the NJDEP's digital resource for extreme heat which includes detailed information on extreme heat, health, and resources.

For more information visit: https://heat-hub-new-jersey-njdep.hub.arcgis.com

Heat Risk Tracking Tool

The CDC's Heat Risk Tracking Tool is an online resource which forecasts heat risk and air quality for the week ahead in your area.

To use this tool visit: https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/

See the Prevent Heat-Related Illness flyer on page 5 for more information on how to protect yourself and others.

Prevention of Heat Illness

During periods of high temperature and humidity, there are things everyone (particularly people at high risk) should do to lessen the chances of heat illness:

Stay well hydrated and drink plenty of water.

Limit your time in the sun, especially between 10am and 4pm, when the sun's rays are most intense.

Avoid over-exertion, particularly during warmer periods of the day.

Dress in loose fitting, light-colored clothing and a hat to minimize skin exposed to the sun.

Keep windows shut, and draperies, shades or blinds drawn during the heat of the day; open windows in the evening or night hours when the air outside is cooler.

Move to cooler rooms during the heat of the day.

During a heat event, one good way to cool down is to take a bath or shower.

Summer Sun Risks

Many medications, including some antipsychotics and antidepressants, can make your skin more sensitive to the sun, putting you at risk for severe sunburn and placing you at potentially greater risk of skin cancer. You can avoid these risks by doing the following:

- Stay indoors or do not spend much time in the sun.
- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs and a hat when in the sun.
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) value of 30 or higher. Apply as directed.

Air Quality Risks

- Be aware of air quality and check advisories that tell you when the level of air pollution can make breathing difficult, especially if you have a respiratory disease.
- Take recommended actions to reduce exposure, such as staying indoors and avoiding exercise or prolonged exertion when outdoors.

Medication Storage

Heat and humidity can alter potency of your medications. Store medications in a cool and dry place away from direct sunlight.

State of New Jersey
Mikie Sherrill, Governor

Department of Human Services
Dr. Stephen Cha, Commissioner

Summer Heat and Sun Risks

When Taking Psychiatric Medications

NEW JERSEY HUMAN SERVICES
DMHAS
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Psychiatric Medications Affect Body Heat Regulation

Psychiatric medications may impair the body's ability to regulate its own temperature during hot/humid weather, raising risks of excessive body temperature or dehydration, which can be fatal.

Adults 65+, individuals with behavioral health conditions, and chronic medical conditions (e.g., heart and pulmonary disease, diabetes, alcoholism and other substance use disorders) are especially vulnerable to heat-related illness.

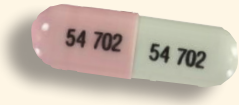
Antipsychotics and many other common medications (lithium, diuretics, antidepressants, anticholinergics, and certain blood pressure and oral Type-2 diabetes medications) are associated with heat illness.

Some examples of psychiatric medications that increase risk of heat-illness include:

Brand Name	Generic Name
Abilify, Aristada	Aripiprazole
Caplyta	Lumateperone
Clozaril	Clozapine
Geodon	Ziprasidone
Haldol	Haloperidol
Invega	Paliperidone
Latuda	Lurasidone
Prolixin	Fluphenazine
Risperdal	Risperidone
Seroquel	Quetiapine
Thorazine	Chlorpromazine
Vraylar	Cariprazine
Zyprexa	Olanzapine
Zoloft	Sertraline
Effexor	Venlafaxine
Xanax	Alprazolam
Ritalin	Methylphenidate
Elavil	Amitriptyline

Lithium

Individuals taking lithium will need to be extra careful during hot weather. Because lithium is a salt, if you lose a lot of fluid quickly through perspiration in hot weather, your lithium level may rise quickly. Be sure to get medical help immediately if you have signs of lithium toxicity (level too high), which include dizziness, unsteadiness, tremor, slurred speech, lethargy, and confusion.



Prevention of Heat-Related Illness

Heat exhaustion is a common condition and can occur before "extreme heat" emergencies are declared. Heat exhaustion results from excessive sweating and inadequate fluid and salt replacement that can begin as heat cramps (uncomfortable muscle spasms) and progress. Because the body is unable to cool itself properly, this condition, if left untreated, can progress to heat stroke.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Irritability or change in behavior
- Low or normal temperature
- Slightly low blood pressure
- Rapid, full pulse and heartbeat
- Cold, pale skin
- Profuse sweating
- Dizziness, headache, and weakness
- Nausea and vomiting
- Abdomen and leg cramps

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related condition and is medical emergency in which body temperature rises dangerously and the body can no longer cool itself. With heat stroke, the symptoms of heat exhaustion worsen and severe confusion or agitation can occur. Heat Stroke is usually seen during heat waves and can lead to death, if an individual is not moved to a cool place and treated immediately.

Treatment of Heat-Related Illness

- Move to a cooler place as soon as possible
- Drink water; oral electrolyte replacement may help after heavy sweating (unless your doctor has advised you to avoid salt).
- Stop all activity and rest
- If symptoms increase or lead to confusion, seizures, or unconsciousness, call 911, as these are signs of life-threatening heat stroke.

NJHealth
New Jersey Department of Health

Prevent Heat-Related Illness (HRI)
Protect yourself and others

HRI can affect everyone, especially vulnerable populations.

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are dangerous and can be life-threatening.

Recognition and Treatment

Heat Exhaustion

Signs

- Heavy sweating
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Fatigue
- Dizziness

What to do

- Move to a cool place.
- Loosen clothing.
- Put cool, wet cloths on body or take a cool bath.
- Drink cool water.
- Get medical help for any of the following:
  - Throwing up or cannot drink
  - Symptoms get worse
  - Symptoms last longer than one hour

Heat Stroke

Signs

- Very high body temperature
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion, loss of consciousness

What to do

- Seek immediate medical attention. **Call 9-1 1 right away.**
- Move to a cool place.
- Lower temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath.

Who is most at risk for heat-related illness?

- People older than 65
- Outdoor workers
- Infants and children
- People who live alone
- People without air conditioning
- People with chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease)
- People on certain medications (e.g., diuretics, some antipsychotic medications, some antidepressants, some antihypertensive agents)

Learn more about heat-related illness and how to protect yourself and your loved one. Visit bit.ly/4lpGWrY.

Prevention
Actions you can take to prevent HRI

For yourself

- **Stay hydrated**. Drink more water than usual and drink before you get thirsty. When working or being active in the heat, drink about one quart of water per hour.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids that have high amounts of sugar and/or caffeine.
- If you need to be outside:
  - Wear lightweight, loose, light-colored clothing.
  - Take frequent, air-conditioned breaks.
  - Avoid direct sunlight.

Check weather reports and reschedule or postpone outdoor activities to another time or day when temperatures are cooler.

For people without air conditioning or vulnerable populations, call NJ 2-1-1 for information regarding Cooling Centers, visit nj211.org/nj-cooling-centers.

For others

Use a Buddy System

- Check on friends, neighbors, older adults, those who have health conditions and/or are on certain medications that can make them more vulnerable to extreme heat. Help others find a cooling center or access to indoor environments with air conditioning.

Beware of hot cars

- It only takes two minutes for a car to reach unsafe temperatures.
- Never leave infants, children, people with disabilities, elderly persons, or pets in a parked car.
- Always check to make sure all children and pets are out of the car before locking it and walking away.
- Teach children that cars are not safe places to play. Store your keys out of reach of children.

For pets

Pets feel the heat just as much as humans do, and they can also suffer from heat-related illnesses.

Follow these guidelines to protect your pet when it's hot:

- Never leave your pet in a parked car. Cracked windows won't protect your pet from suffering from heat stroke, or worse, during hot summer days.
- Provide fresh, cool water every day in a tip-proof bowl.
- Exercise pets in the early morning or evening hours.
- Avoid exposure to asphalt and concrete, which can get very hot and cause severe burns on the pads of your pet's feet.
- Always provide your pet with shade and shelter to protect it from extreme temperatures.

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