

## Public Health Advisory: Extreme Heat/Heatwave

### Do's

#### For general population

##### Stay hydrated:

- Drink sufficient water whenever possible, even if you are not thirsty. Thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration.
- Carry drinking water when traveling
- Use Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), and consume homemade drinks like lemon water, butter milk/lassi, fruit juices with some added salt.
- Eat seasonal fruits and vegetables with high water content like water melon, musk melon, orange, grapes, pineapple, cucumber, lettuce or other locally available fruits and vegetables.

##### Stay covered:

- Wear thin loose, cotton garments preferably light coloured
- Cover your head: use umbrella, hat, cap, towel and other traditional head gears during exposure to direct sunlight
- Wear shoes or chappals while going out in sun

##### Stay alert:

- Listen to Radio; watch TV; read Newspaper for local weather news. Get the latest update of weather on India Meteorological Department (IMD) website at <https://mausam.imd.gov.in/>

##### Stay indoors/in shade as much as possible:

- In well ventilated and cool places
- Block direct sunlight and heat waves: Keep windows and curtains closed during the day, especially on the sunny side of your house. Open them up at night to let cooler air in.
- If going outdoor, limit your outdoor activity to cooler times of the day i.e., morning and evening
- Reschedule or plan outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day.

#### For vulnerable population

Although anyone at any time can suffer from the heat stress & heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others and should be given additional attention.

These include:

- Infants and young children
- Pregnant women
- Physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure
- Travelers from colder climate to a hot climate should allow one week's time for their bodies to acclimatized to heat, avoid overexertion, and should drink plenty of water. Acclimatization is achieved by gradual increase (over 10-15days) in exposure/physical activity in hot environment
- People working outdoors
- People who have a mental illness

#### Other precautions

- Elderly or sick people living alone should be supervised and their health monitored on a daily basis.
- Keep your home cool, use curtains, shutters or sunshade and open windows at night.
- Try to remain on lower floors during the day.
- Use fan, spray bottles, damp cloths, ice towels to cool down body.
- Immersing feet in 20°C water above ankle provides rapid cooling by reducing dehydration and thermal discomfort.

## Don'ts

- Avoid getting out in the sun, especially between 12:00 noon and 03:00 pm
- Avoid strenuous activities when outside in the afternoon
- Do not go out barefoot
- Avoid cooking during peak summer hours. Open doors and windows to ventilate cooking area adequately
- Avoid alcohol, tea, coffee and carbonated soft drinks or drinks with large amount of sugar- as these actually, lead to loss of more body fluid or may cause stomach cramps
- Avoid high-protein food and do not eat stale food
- Do not leave children or pets in parked vehicle. Temperature inside a vehicle could get dangerous.

## For Employers and workers

- Provide cool drinking water at work place and remind them to drink a cup of water every 20minutes or more frequently to stay hydrated
- Caution workers to avoid direct sunlight
- Provide shaded work area for workers. Temporary shelter can be created at work site.
- Schedule strenuous and outdoor jobs to cooler times of the day i.e., morning and evening hours
- Increase the frequency and length of rest breaks for outdoor activities- at least every 5 minutes after 1 hour of labour work
- Listen to Radio; watch TV; read Newspaper for local weather news and act accordingly. Get the latest update of weather on India Meteorological Department (IMD) website at <https://mausam.imd.gov.in/>
- Assign additional workers or slow down the pace of work
- Make sure everyone is properly acclimatized: it takes weeks to acclimatize to a hotter climate. Do not work for more than three hours in one day for the first five days of work. Gradually increase the amount and time of work.
- Train workers to recognize factors which may increase the risk of developing a heat related illness and the signs and symptoms of heat stress and start a “buddy system” since people are not likely to notice their own symptoms
- Trained First Aid providers should be available and an emergency response plan should be in place in the event of a heat-related illness.
- Pregnant workers and workers with a medical condition or those taking certain medications should discuss with their physicians about working in the heat.
- If working outdoors wear light-coloured clothing preferably long sleeve shirt and pants, and cover the head to prevent exposure to direct sunlight.
- Organize awareness campaigns for employees
- Install temperature and forecast display at the workplace.
- Distribute informational pamphlets and organize training for employers and workers regarding health impacts of extreme heat and recommendations to protect themselves during high temperatures.

## Precautions During Mass gathering/Sport event

- Outdoor/indoor crowded situations increase risk of acute heat-related illnesses (HRI) even in absence of active heatwave alerts in the area.
- Physical exertion, direct sun exposure, overcrowding, and difficult access to water, food and shade may worsen health in vulnerable groups.
- Attendees should stay hydrated, cool, be aware of HRI signs, symptoms and seek medical care.