



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Government of India

Ensuring Safe Pregnancy during High Temperatures with Changing Climate



Hot weather and pregnancy: Why it affects mothers and babies?

As temperatures rise due to climate change, it is important for pregnant women to know that spending time in hot weather, even for a few days or weeks, can harm their own health and their baby's well-being.



National Programme
on Climate Change
and Human Health

For Mothers

How hot weather can affect mothers.



Exposure to high heat especially heatwaves in the early months of pregnancy can increase the chances of developing high blood pressure or high sugar/ diabetes and increase the risk of miscarriage.



During hot weather, a pregnant woman's body must work harder to stay cool. This can put extra stress on the heart and body and may lead to serious health problems, especially in the last months of pregnancy.



During summers, more miscarriages are recorded in the early phase of pregnancy and more health problems are recorded for mothers in the later phase of pregnancy.



Hot weather with increased air pollution, dust, and fires can have added harmful effect on the health of pregnant women.



Some common medicines for cold, allergies (antihistamines) or high blood pressure can make it harder for the body to stay cool and hydrated.

What can mothers do during hot weather/heatwave?

Be aware of temperature and heatwave alerts in your area through local news or follow mausam.imd.gov.in and plan your activities in cooler part of the day.

Know and use simple cooling methods: use fans, cold showers or stay in shaded/cooler areas.

Stay hydrated by drinking enough water or fluids so you don't feel thirsty; clean drinking water is the best; fruit juice, buttermilk provide some nutrients. If you sweat a lot or experience diarrhea/vomiting, take ORS, coconut water or lemon juice.

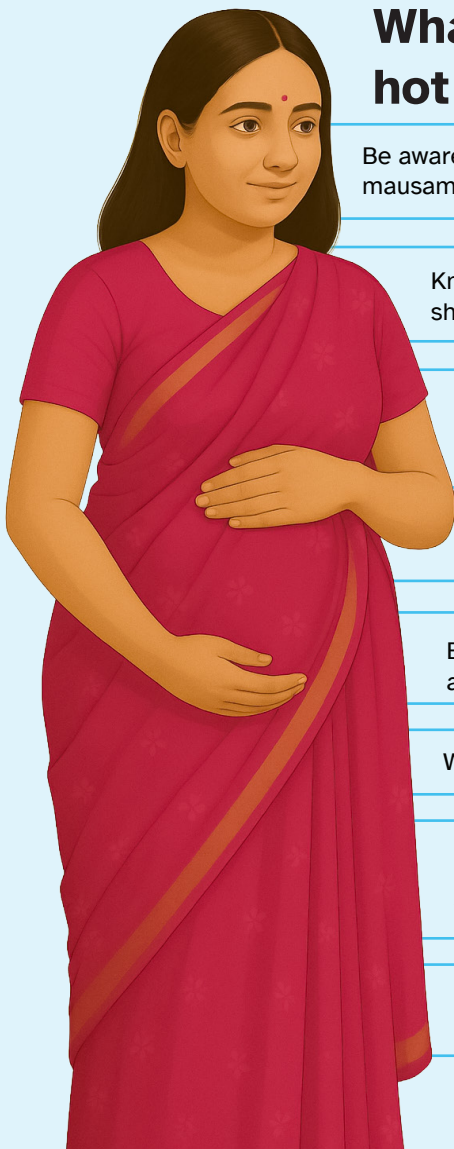
Avoid beverages with high caffeine, sugar, and salt.

Ensure good nutrition by eating balanced meals, seasonal fruits and vegetables, avoiding excessive oily and sugary foods

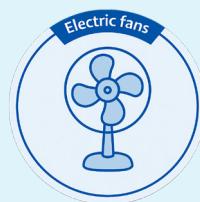
Wear light colored, loose fitting, cotton clothes.

Maintain your medication schedule and get it reviewed by your doctor for any adjustments during hot weather. Do not take any over the counter medicines without consulting your doctor.

Attend regular antenatal check-ups, discuss heat exposure and seek prompt and additional care for any problems or warning signs.



Simple, sustainable cooling measures



- Electric fans can cool healthy adults by up to 4°C when the ambient temperature is below 39°C
- In humid conditions (Relative humidity above 50%), fans can cool up to 42°C temperatures
- In very hot conditions following additional measures that can reduce heat-induced discomfort.

- Drinking cold water: Hydration lowers body temperature quickly
- Not effective if person has started sweating

- Crushed ice wrapped in a damp towel applied to the neck and chest
- Lowers body temperature if it is up to 45°C
- Requires access to ice

- Spraying over the body to keep the skin wet
- Reduces heat strain & dehydration if temperature is up to 47°C
- Useful in absence of power supply

- Wet clothing cools down body
- Useful in absence of power supply
- Re-soaked around every 60 minutes

- Feet dipped in cold water (20°C) water up to ankles
- Reduces dehydration and thermal discomfort in hot, humid conditions
- Useful in absence of power supply
- Risk of slipping/falling

Watch out for dehydration!

If you experience any of the following, ensure adequate water intake to avoid dehydration, rest in cool place till you feel better

- Cold, clammy skin
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded.
- Excessive sweating or inability to sweat
- Fatigue • Headache • Thirst
- Muscle cramps or spasms
- Nausea/ Abdominal cramping
- Swelling in extremities
- Darker color urine
- Infrequent urination
- Early contraction of uterus

If you feel unwell, don't wait. Talk to your Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) or doctor

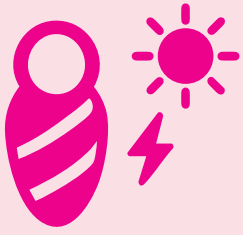
Danger signs to look for in mothers

seek immediate medical care (Call 108/102) if following is experienced/observed

- Confusion/fainting and un-responsiveness
- Seizures/ coma
- Rapid heartbeat and/or heavy breathing
- Body temperature more than 38°C/ 100.4°F and rising
- Cramps in arms, legs, and stomach
- Dark-colored urine, signs of dehydration
- No urination for more than 8 hours
- Early contractions
- Excessive sweating and pale skin
- No sweating, yet skin feels hot and flushed
- Swelling of face or generalized swelling
- Sudden or extreme headache or vision changes
- Severe nausea or vomiting
- Excessive thirst or Loss of appetite and feeling sick

For Babies

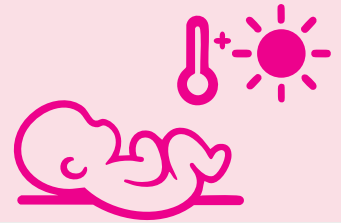
How hot weather can affect babies.



During first three months of pregnancy even a day of exposure to high temperature/heatwave can affect baby's development.



Hot weather at any stage of pregnancy can increase the chances of baby being born with a defect, born too early (preterm birth), death of the baby inside the uterus at full term (stillbirth) or born too small (low birth weight).



Newborn babies are very sensitive to heat. Their bodies cannot control their body temperature well especially in hot and humid conditions with atmospheric temperature above 31°C.

What can you do during hot weather/heatwave for babies?



Keep the room cool and well-ventilated to ensure baby's axillary temperature remains normal (between 36.5°C-37.5°C / 97.7°F to 99.5°F) and not unusually warm.

Avoid baby's exposure to the direct high heat, direct sunlight indoors and outdoors.

Ensure hydration: continue breastfeeding frequently, avoid trying new food options during high heat unless advised.

Ensure baby passes urine at least 6 to 8 times per day.

Never leave the baby in a closed vehicle or under direct sunlight.

Simple, sustainable cooling measures

Dress light



Dress your baby in light clothing and use layers to adjust to the temperature.

Plenty of fluids



Offer an extra breastfeed or bottle for babies under 6 months. Babies may also require shorter feeds but more often.

Shade





















Keep your baby in the shade and avoid direct sunlight by closing curtains or windows where sunlight enters the room.

Use a fan



Use a fan to help circulate cool air. If using an air conditioner, don't let it get too cold.

| Identify early signs of heat stress in babies | Identify serious signs of heat impact in babies, seek immediate medical care (Call 108/102) |
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|  Heat rashes (especially in diaper area, neck, armpits) |  Refusal to feed |
|  Mild irritability or more crying than usual |  Excessive irritability |
|  Warm to touch, mild increase in temperature |  Sunken eyes and/or soft spot-on forehead |
|  Irritability during feeding |  Dry mouth and absence of tear/sunken eyes |
|  Less urine or fewer wet diapers |  Repeated vomiting or diarrhea |
|  Flushed cheeks or sweating |  Decreased urine output/ No wet diaper for 6+ hours |
|  Mild vomiting once or twice |  Lethargy, floppy limbs, difficulty in waking up, not responding normally, seizures |
|  Excessive sleeping |  Fast breathing or racing heart |
| <p>If not resolved, contact ASHA, ANM, your doctor or visit nearest health care facility.</p> |  Skin feels hot and dry or hot and clammy |
| |  Bleeding from any part of the body |



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