

# Preparation to Stay Safe During Heat Waves

## My Spring To-Do List

**Extremely hot weather can be dangerous.** It can make medical conditions worse or cause serious heat-related illnesses. Staying hydrated, keeping cool, and having support can greatly lower everyone's risk. When you're well-prepared, you and those you care for can stay safe.

Use this Spring To-Do List, along with your Heat Safety Plan, to help you get prepared.

### Create a support group of one or more Check-in Companions

It's important to have a support network of nearby "Check-in Companions" (e.g. friends, family, neighbours) that you can stay in touch with and/or visit during heat waves or other emergencies. **This is especially important** if you know someone who is at higher risk during heat events (an older adult, someone who has chronic health conditions, or who lives alone), or if you yourself are at higher risk.

- ☐ Find out who can be your Check-in Companion(s) – people you can stay in touch with and/or visit during a heat wave to make sure you're both okay. If it helps, let them know your doctor recommended it. Write their name and phone number in your Heat Safety Plan (page 3).

### If you don't have air conditioning (AC)

If you don't have AC, or if your AC stops working, it's important to know where you can go to cool down during a heat wave. Spending some time in air-conditioned spaces during extreme heat events is associated with a reduced risk of death. You should be able to stay in the air-conditioned environment until you feel cool and refreshed – generally at least an hour or two a day.

- ☐ In the **"Where I Can Go to Cool Off"** section of your Heat Safety Plan (page 3), write down which of these are available to you if you need to cool down:
  - ☐ Nearby Check-in Companion or other person with AC
  - ☐ Room in your building that has AC
  - ☐ Library
  - ☐ Mall
  - ☐ Municipal shelter or facility
  - ☐ Recreation centre
  - ☐ Cinema
  - ☐ Pool, splash pad or beach
  - ☐ Place of worship with AC
  - ☐ Other place with AC: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ It's also important to have a plan for where you can stay overnight if your home gets too hot. Ask a friend, family member, or neighbour with AC if you could stay with them, and write their name and phone number in the **"Where I Can Spend the Night If My Home Becomes Too Hot"** section of your Heat Safety Plan (page 3).

### If you don't have a car

- ☐ In your Heat Safety Plan, enter the name of a nearby Check-in Companion or other person who can drive you to a cool place or to the hospital if needed during a heat wave.
- ☐ You may want to discuss transportation options with a family member. You can also call **211** (a 24-hour helpline that can connect you to local social services and community supports) or call your municipality to find out what local transportation options are available during a heat wave. Enter the contact information for requesting transportation in your Heat Safety Plan (page 3).

### If you take medication

- ☐ Ask your pharmacist if your meds could increase your risk during a heat wave, and follow their recommendations. See a list of some medications at: [cpin-rcip.com/meds](https://cpin-rcip.com/meds)

## Arrange for help if you have mobility concerns

- ☐ Make arrangements for someone to be available who can help you move to a cooler area of your home or help you with cool showers/baths during a heat wave. They should be able to visit you regularly and often.

## Get your home ready

- ☐ Identify the coolest area in your home. This is where you should spend most of your time during a heat wave. Plan how you can arrange the area so that you can take care of your daily activities and, if possible, sleep in this cooler space.
- ☐ If you have an air conditioner (AC), check to make sure it is in working condition.
- ☐ If you have a fan, make sure it's easily accessible so you can pull it out when needed.
- ☐ If you don't have an AC or fans, consider getting one or both. If cost is an issue, go to [cpin-rcip.com/help](http://cpin-rcip.com/help) to see programs that may provide financial assistance. You can also call 211 to see if there is a local agency that can help you with the expense.
- ☐ If you don't have curtains, blinds or other window coverings, arrange to buy, make, or get some to block sunlight and keep your home cooler during extreme heat. A low-cost option is covering windows with cardboard or blankets.
- ☐ If you don't have an indoor thermometer, arrange to get one (available at hardware stores).

## Get personal supplies

- ☐ Get an oral or ear thermometer if you don't already have one.
- ☐ Make sure you have light, loose-fitting clothing you can wear when it's very hot.
- ☐ Get a spray bottle so you can mist water onto yourself when needed.
- ☐ Make sure you have a water bottle that you can take with you if you have to go outdoors during a heat wave.

## If you fast for religious reasons

- ☐ Ask your religious leader if accommodations can be made for you to stay hydrated on days when there is a heat event.

## Drinking water

- ☐ If you don't drink tap water, make sure you are always well stocked with bottled water.

## Be prepared for power outages

- ☐ Have a plan for potential power outages. Follow the tips at [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca)
- ☐ Keep extra water on hand in case you need it during a power outage.
- ☐ Keep a flashlight in an easily accessible place in your home.
- ☐ Make arrangements so that you can visit a Check-in Companion or other place with AC to cool off if your home becomes too hot – See ***"Where I Can Go to Cool Off"*** and ***"Where I Can Spend the Night If My Home Becomes Too Hot"*** in your Heat Safety Plan.
- ☐ If you don't already have one, consider getting a portable charger, power bank, or solar recharger for your cell phone.

## Monitor the weather

- ☐ Download the WeatherCAN App at [www.canada.ca/weathercan](http://www.canada.ca/weathercan), or bookmark Environment Canada's weather update website at [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca)

**Learn more about how to prepare for heat waves at**  
**[www.cpin-rcip.com/heat](http://www.cpin-rcip.com/heat)**

# MY PERSONAL HEAT SAFETY PLAN

(keep this plan handy so you can find it easily when needed)

## KEY Information

### MY SUPPORT NETWORK:

My Check-in Companions: *include name(s) and phone number(s)*

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Driver/Local transportation: \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

OHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ Version code: \_\_\_\_\_

My pharmacy: \_\_\_\_\_

My primary care provider/clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

My local public health agency (EOHU/OPH): \_\_\_\_\_

My municipality: \_\_\_\_\_

For a 24-hour helpline that can connect you to local supports and services, **dial 211**.

If you are experiencing an emergency, please **call 911**.

### WHERE I CAN GO TO COOL OFF:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- If you don't know where you can go to cool down during an extreme heat event, you can call 211 for help and information. 211 is a 24-hour helpline that can connect you to local social services, programs and community supports.
- You can also call your municipality to see if they have a cooling centre open. If you live in the Ottawa region, you can find this information at [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/BeatTheHeat](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/BeatTheHeat).
- If you need transportation, call the driver/transportation number you've written down in MY SUPPORT NETWORK, above.

### WHERE I CAN SPEND THE NIGHT IF MY HOME BECOMES TOO HOT:

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See next page for "What to Do When a Heat Warning is Issued"

Learn more about how to protect yourself from heat waves at

[www.cpin-rcip.com/heat](http://www.cpin-rcip.com/heat)

## What to Do When a HEAT WARNING Is Issued

### GET READY:

- **Reach out to your Check-in Companions group.** Make plans to stay in touch daily during the heat wave, and arrange for someone (your check-in companion, personal service worker, or someone else) to visit you regularly in case you need help.
- Monitor the weather on your WeatherCAN app or online at [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca)
- Renew your meds, get groceries, and get personal and pet supplies, if needed.
- If you don't drink tap water, make sure you are well stocked with bottled water.
- If you have a car, make sure it has a full tank of gas or is fully charged.
- Follow your pharmacist's advice regarding any medications that may increase your risk during a heat wave.
- If you fast, make sure you stay hydrated. It's not safe to restrict your water intake during a heat wave.
- Make sure any supplies you might need (fan, flashlight, batteries, indoor and body thermometers, etc.) are close at hand.
- Consider closing your blinds or curtains ahead of the heat wave, to block sunlight and help prevent your home from heating up as quickly. A low-cost option is covering windows with cardboard.
- Be prepared to leave your home to go a cooler space if it gets too hot: See "WHERE I CAN GO TO COOL OFF" and "WHERE I CAN SPEND THE NIGHT IF MY HOME BECOMES TOO HOT" in the **Key Information** section of this Heat Safety Plan.
- To learn more about how to keep children safe, see [\*Keep children cool! Protect your child from extreme heat\*](#) from Health Canada at [www.canada.ca/heat](http://www.canada.ca/heat) (click on the "Related resources" tab)

## What to Do DURING THE HEAT EVENT

### PROTECT YOURSELF:

- **Call your Check-in Companion(s) at \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM to stay in touch and check on each other during the heat event.**
- Monitor the weather on your WeatherCAN App or online at [www.weather.gc.ca](http://www.weather.gc.ca)
- If you have an air conditioner, turn it on! It plays an important role in protecting you from heat-related illnesses.
- Avoid spending time outdoors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you do go out, wear light clothing and a hat, bring a water bottle, and take frequent sips.
- Close your blinds or curtains during the day or block your windows with cardboard or blankets.
- If there is a power outage, follow your emergency plan or use the tips at [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca)
- Be prepared to leave your home if it becomes too hot.

### IF YOUR HOME IS WARM/HOT:

- Use fans to keep air moving and to help you feel cooler (only if the room temperature is below 35°C or 95°F).
- Take off extra layers of clothing to expose as much skin as possible so it can cool down more easily.
- Limit caffeine/alcohol to avoid dehydration.
- Avoid using your oven. Use the microwave to heat things or make food that doesn't require cooking (like sandwiches, cold soups etc.).
- Turn off non-essential devices that generate heat.

- Spend time in an air-conditioned space for at least a couple of hours each day: See ***"Where I Can Go to Cool Down"*** in the Key Information section of this Heat Safety Plan.
- Fill a spray bottle with cool water and spray it on your face and neck – as it evaporates off your skin, you will cool off.
- Keep wet towels in a plastic bag in the fridge. Place them on your neck, chest or back when hot.
- Spend time in cool water (take cool showers/baths, sit with your feet in cool water, or visit a pool).
- Make sure you're drinking enough water. Drink often and before you feel thirsty to replace fluids. When you're dehydrated, it's hard on the heart. Certain chronic conditions can start to get worse, or heat exhaustion can set in.
- If you're passing urine that is darker than usual or haven't peed for many hours, you may be dehydrated. Drink more water.
- Open your windows if the temperature outside is cooler than inside, if it is safe to do so, and if there is no air quality warning (see [www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi](http://www.airqualityontario.com/aqhi) for air quality warnings).
- Sleep in a cool room, if possible.
- **Monitor your indoor temperature:** Aim to keep your indoor temperature no higher than 26°C (78.8°F). If your indoor temperature remains higher than 26°C, you may need to leave your home to get to a cooler space. See *"Where I Can Go to Cool Off"* and *"Where I Can Spend the Night If My Home Becomes Too Hot"* in the Key Information section of this Heat Safety Plan.
- **Monitor your body temperature:** Take your temperature daily during heat wave and if you start feeling hot, take it more often. If your temperature is greater than 37.2°C (99°F) and doesn't respond to cooling: Go to a cooler or air-conditioned space to cool down. See *"Where I Can Go to Cool Off"* and *"Where I Can Spend the Night If My Home Becomes Too Hot"* in the Key Information section of this Heat Safety Plan.
  - **If your resting body temperature rises above 39°C (102.2°F), you are in the DANGER ZONE – Call 911.**

## DANGER ZONE:

The danger zone is when you are in a situation that has the potential to escalate into a crisis. If you or someone else enters the danger zone, **it is important to take immediate action.**

If your home becomes very hot, take the measures discussed above to cool yourself down and be ready to leave your home to go to a cooler space if needed.

Becoming overheated can quickly become dangerous. If you experience any of the symptoms below, you are in the danger zone. Do not go to sleep when you are in the danger zone.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION:** Weakness, headache, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, thirst, dark urine, intense fatigue. If you experience any of these symptoms during extreme heat, immediately move to a cool place and drink liquids. **If symptoms are not relieved by drinking water, resting and cooling: Call 911.**

**HEAT STROKE:** Red and hot skin, dizziness, nausea, confusion, loss of coordination or a change in consciousness: **Heat stroke is a medical emergency!** If you or someone else is experiencing these symptoms: **Call 911.**

If your resting body temperature rises above 39°C (102.2°F) you require immediate emergency attention: **Call 911.**

Learn more about how to protect yourself from heat waves at  
[www.cpin-rcip.com/heat](http://www.cpin-rcip.com/heat)