

SUMMER SENSE – TOP TIPS TO KEEP COOL IN THE HEAT

Melbourne is renowned for searing hot, dry days during summer. Melbourne City Council has emergency planning in place to ensure we remain vigilant and fully prepared for the potential impact of extreme heat or heatwave events in our municipality.

A heatwave is a period of unusual and uncomfortable hot weather that could impact on human health, community infrastructure such as the power supply, and public transport services.

During extreme heat days, we often dehydrate quicker than we realise. Heat related illnesses occur when the body is unable to adequately cool itself, namely through sweating. This can result in a number of conditions such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can be life-threatening.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can suffer from a heat related illness, however the following could be more vulnerable during an extreme heat event:

- those who are aged over 65 years, especially if living alone

- people who are overweight, obese or have pre-existing medical conditions
- infants and children
- people who are experiencing homelessness or have a low income
- international residents, students and visitors
- residents in high rise apartments
- outdoor events-goers and staff
- people who work or are physically active outdoors
- sporting event participants

There are actions you can take to prevent heat related illness for yourself or others

- Keep your home cool by installing window shades or awnings to block the sun. Close blinds and curtains during the day. Open windows when there is a cool breeze.
- Stay indoors and use an air conditioner if you have one.

For more information, contact City of Melbourne
Telephone: 9658 9658

melbourne.vic.gov.au/summersense



- If your accommodation is too hot, consider going to a cool public place such as an air conditioned store, shopping centre, movie theatre, gallery or public pool to keep cool, or visit a friend or family member that has an air conditioned home.
- Keep yourself cool by applying wet towels on your neck and shoulders, putting your feet in cool water and taking cool (not cold) showers.
- Avoid strenuous activity, especially during the sun's peak hours 11am to 4pm. If you must engage in strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, usually in the morning between 4am and 7am.
- If possible, stay out of the sun. When in the sun, wear sunscreen (at least SPF 30+) and a hat to protect your face and head.
- Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible.
- Drink fluids – particularly water – even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid beverages containing alcohol, caffeine, or high amounts of sugar. People with heart, kidney or liver disease or on fluid restricted diets should check with their doctors before increasing fluid intake.
- There are many drinking fountains throughout Melbourne city which are free for the public to use, including a filtered water station in the Bourke Street Mall. Download the free smartphone app Choose Tap to find the nearest water station when you are out and about.
- Make a special effort to check on your family and neighbours during a heatwave, especially if they are seniors, young children, and people with special needs. Many older people live alone and could suffer unnecessarily in the heat because they are isolated from friends and family.
- Never leave children, pets, or those who require special care in a parked car.
- Be prepared for power outages and have an emergency kit ready with items such as flashlight, battery powered AM/FM radio, bottled water, first aid kit and extra batteries. Have details of your power supply company readily available and keep windows open to ensure proper ventilation.

Further information

For further information about City of Melbourne heatwave planning, drinking fountains and cool places maps, and other heatwave resources:

melbourne.vic.gov.au/summersense

For further information on heatwaves, preventing heat related illness and food safety due to emergency power failure refer to Department of Health:

health.vic.gov.au

For information on exercising safely in hot weather refer to the Sports Medicine Australia:

sma.org.au

For life threatening emergencies call 000

**For 24-hour health advice, contact
NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24**

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