

What to do during extreme heat

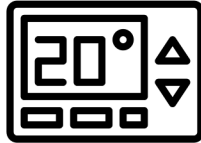
Stay in touch with your heat buddy

Keep in regular contact and make sure to check that both of you are ok. Ask for help if you need it, because heat can make it hard to think and do household tasks.



Monitor the temperature inside your home

If your apartment is uncomfortably hot or your thermometer is over 30 C, go someplace cooler if you can. Places with mechanical cooling, like cooling areas in community centers, will keep your body in a safe temperature range.



Stay hydrated

Drink water even if you're not thirsty to keep your body cool. Avoid excess sugar and caffeine that can dehydrate you.



Cool your body

Apply cold packs or frozen towels to where your veins are closest to the skin: your wrists, neck, chest, or temples.

Keeps windows closed and covered

Keep the hot air out during the day. Open your windows late in the day to let in cooler night air.

Eat smaller meals with more water-rich foods

Regular smaller meals are easier to digest, and water-rich foods keep you hydrated. Large meals take more time to digest and increase your body's temperature.



Keep your activity level lower than usual

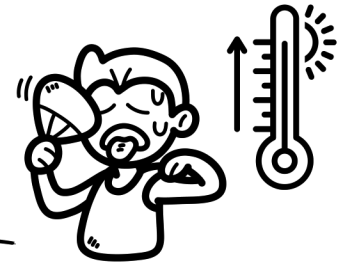
Doing less keeps your body temperature lower. If you do have to be active, try to limit it to the morning and evening, and take rest breaks often.

Go to places that can help you cool down

If you don't have air conditioning, know the places you go to cool your body down. Libraries, community centres, shopping malls, and shaded parks can all be places you can cool down.



Preparing for extreme heat



The Heat Dome of 2021 was the deadliest weather event in Canadian history, with at least 619 people dead as a consequence of the extreme heat. That's why Georgia Strait Alliance is building community to support each other and prevent further harm, and sharing these resources to help in the case of another extreme heat event.

Get informed

Check the forecast

Know where to find out about coming heat waves and pay attention to emergency alerts.



Get a heat buddy

Having someone who you check in on and who checks on you is an important way to make it through extreme heat. Talk to a friend, neighbour or family member and set up a check in schedule for heat waves.

Know where you can go to cool down

If you don't have air conditioning, know the places you go to cool your body down. Libraries, community centres, shopping malls, and shaded parks can all be places you can cool down.



Identify the coolest parts of your home

Know which parts of your home get hottest or stay cooler. Think about moving your bed to the coolest area of your home to make sleeping easier.

Medications and medical conditions

Some medications and medical conditions can make it harder for your body to cool down. Talk to your medical professional about risks.



Get supplies

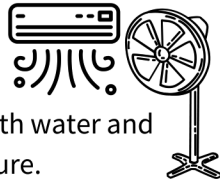
Heat supplies can be expensive, so get what is reasonable for your budget. Some of the basics you may need include:



- A thermometer to monitor indoor temperature. Indoor temperatures are often hotter than outside during heat events.
- Blinds or curtains to keep the sun out of your apartment during the hottest days.
- Gel cooling packs can be applied to your body to cool you down.
- Small towels or rags that you can wet can keep your body cool.
- Light weight, loose fitting clothes.

Some ideas about how to keep your space cooler include:

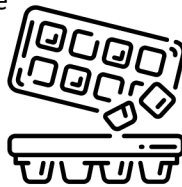
- A fan to move cooler air. Fans alone will not keep your body cool in high temperatures, but spraying yourself with water and letting the fan dry you off can lower your body temperature.
- Air conditioners can cool your space effectively, but are expensive and some landlords don't allow them or charge extra, so make sure to check before making this expense.



Air quality can often get bad during heat waves. An air purifier can clean the air in your apartment, and an N95 respirator mask can filter out wildfire smoke pollution.



Ice and frozen packs. Prepare some ice cubes or ice packs to use for cooling yourself. You can make separate bags using ziplock or small plastic bags, or even an empty egg carton lined with aluminum (to keep the water from soaking through) or a cupcake tray. Make some for eating/drinking and some to apply to your body.



EXTREME HEAT CHECKLIST

- I have informed myself about extreme heat
- I have asked a friend, family member, or neighbour to be my heat buddy
- I have researched and identified my cooling needs
- I have prepared my supplies, medication and other necessities
- I know where to go in case I need to cool off away from home

When you know the heat is coming

Talk to your heat buddy

Confirm contact information and addresses. Be clear on what your check in schedule will be, and confirm the places you can meet if the heat is too much inside your apartment.



Prepare your cooling supplies

You want to do less during extreme heat, so prepare what you can ahead of time. Stock up your freezer with ice cubes and wet towels or rags inside ziplocks.



Food and drinks

Do food prep ahead of time and stock up on food that doesn't require a lot of preparation. Fill up water jugs.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Parks and Cooling Centres

If your residence is over the dangerous temperature for folks over 31C), seek out a green, shaded park or cooling centre. You can call your City Hall for inquiries about the available public resources in your area.



Neighbourhood Houses

Being prepared with an extreme heat preparedness kit (thermometers, spray bottles, etc.) is integral in a heat emergency. If you cannot access this equipment yourself, reach out to community service organizations like neighbourhood houses to help.



Community Health Centers

Urgent primary care centres are an important place to go for urgent, non-life threatening injuries or illnesses, including during a heat wave. Many of these also have information and workshops on how to prepare for and survive future heat waves and extreme heat emergencies.

