

Hot weather warning issued to people shielding and more vulnerable groups

News story

Public Health England issues a heat warning encouraging vulnerable people to take care during the exceptionally hot weather forecast this week.



People shielding indoors from COVID-19, older people, those with underlying health conditions and very young children are all more vulnerable from the higher temperatures.

Emer O'Connell, Consultant in Public Health at Public Health England, said:

Most of us look forward to the warmer weather, but some people may find it more difficult to cope with these higher temperatures. Older people, those with underlying health conditions and very young children are more at risk in hot weather.

This summer, many of us are spending more time at home due to COVID-19, especially those shielding, as they are at high risk of developing severe infection. A lot of homes can overheat, so it's important we continue to check up on older people and those with underlying health conditions, particularly if they're living alone and may be socially isolated.

You will need to do things differently this year, for example, keeping in touch by phone. If you need to provide direct care to someone at risk from hot weather, follow government guidance on how to do this safely. The most important advice is to ensure they stay hydrated, keep cool and know how to keep their homes cool.

Jo Churchill, Health Minister, said:

With plenty of sunshine and soaring temperatures expected over the

coming days, many of us across the UK will be outside making the most of the fantastic weather while following the social distancing rules.

It's important, however, to make sure you stay safe in the sun: apply sunscreen regularly, stay hydrated and protect your head from the sun. Look out for those who are vulnerable in the heat and provide support where needed, continuing to follow social distancing guidance.

To enjoy the sun while staying safe:

- drink plenty of fluids and avoid excess alcohol. Everyone is at risk of dehydration in hot temperatures, but babies, children and older people are particularly vulnerable
- stay cool indoors: open windows when the air feels cooler outside than inside; shade or cover windows exposed to direct sunlight; move to a cooler part of the house, especially for sleeping
- slow down when it's hot: exertion heats up our bodies so plan any strenuous activities (such as exercise and gardening) outside the hottest time of the day, typically 11am to 3pm
- cool your skin with water. You could use a cool wet sponge or flannel, cool water spray, cold packs around the neck and armpits, or a cool, wet sheet
- stay connected and listen to the weather forecast. Knowing the forecast can help you plan ahead and adapt what you're doing
- dress appropriately for the weather. Protect yourself against the sun's radiation and keep yourself cool by wearing thin cotton clothes
- eat smaller meals, more often. Cold salads and fruit are the perfect summer foods

For more information on the common signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke, visit [NHS.UK](https://www.nhs.uk).

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