

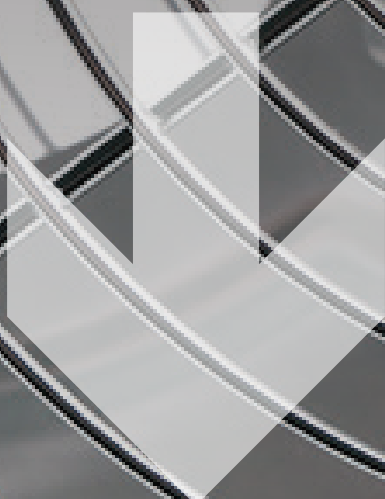
Volunteers, Voluntary Groups and Health Champions

Heatwave Alert

Level 2 and 3 - Take Action














These levels outline the need to take action in response to very hot weather in the West Midlands. Level 2 refers to a heatwave being forecast as very likely in the next 2-3 days. Level 3 alerts are sent when the heatwave has arrived.



ACTIONS



The heat can be dangerous for certain groups of people such as the elderly, those with existing medical conditions or the very young. In your valuable work as volunteers you may come into contact with people from these groups. The Clinical Commissioning Groups in Coventry and Warwickshire, Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council are therefore encouraging people to follow the following tips and promote the public health messages to keep safe in the heat:

-  Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be less able to look after themselves
-  Shut windows and pull down the shades when it is hotter outside. If it's safe, open them for ventilation when it is cooler.
-  Avoid the heat: stay out of the sun and don't go out between 11am and 3pm (the hottest part of the day) if you're vulnerable to the effects of heat.
-  Keep rooms cool by using shades or reflective material outside the windows. If this isn't possible, use light-coloured curtains and keep them closed (metallic blinds and dark curtains can make the room hotter).
-  Have cool baths or showers, and splash yourself with cool water.
-  Drink cold drinks regularly, such as water and fruit juice. Avoid tea, coffee and alcohol.
-  Stay tuned to the weather forecast on the radio or TV, or visit the Met Office website.
-  Plan ahead to make sure you have enough supplies, such as food, water and any medications you need.
-  Identify the coolest room in the house so you know where to go to keep cool.
-  Wear loose, cool clothing and a hat if you go outdoors.
-  If you think you or someone you come into contact with needs treatment, see if you can receive it from health services other than A&E, unless seriously ill or injured. For example use NHS 111, consult your GP, local pharmacy or go to a Walk In Centre.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH HEATWAVE MESSAGES

Stay out of the heat:

- keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
- if you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf
- avoid extreme physical exertion
- wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes

Cool yourself down:

- have plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
- eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high water content
- take a cool shower, bath or body wash
- sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck

Keep your environment cool:

- keeping your living space cool is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who can't look after themselves
- place a thermometer in your main living room and bedroom to keep a check on the temperature
- keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and open windows at night when the temperature has dropped
- close curtains that receive morning or afternoon sun, however, care should be taken with metal blinds and dark curtains, as these can absorb heat – consider replacing or putting reflective material in-between them and the window space
- turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat
- keep indoor plants and bowls of water in the house as evaporation helps cool the air
- if possible, move into a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- electric fans may provide some relief, if temperatures are below 35°C²

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH HEATWAVE MESSAGES

(Longer-term)

- consider putting up external shading outside windows
- use pale, reflective external paints
- have your loft and cavity walls insulated – this keeps the heat in when it is cold and out when it is hot
- grow trees and leafy plants near windows to act as natural air-conditioners

Look out for others:

- keep an eye on isolated, elderly, ill or very young people and make sure they are able to keep cool
- ensure that babies, children or elderly people are not left alone in stationary cars
- check on elderly or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during a heatwave
- be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or further help is needed

If you have a health problem:

- keep medicines below 25 °C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging)
- seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications

If you or others feel unwell:

- try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate
- rest immediately in a cool place if you have painful muscular spasms (particularly in the legs, arms or abdomen, in many cases after sustained exercise during very hot weather), and drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes.
- medical attention is needed if heat cramps last more than one hour
- consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist