

OWS Excessive Heat Tips

Heat Exhaustion is often the 1st sign that your body is overheating. Warning signs include: heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, weakness, dizziness or fainting, headache, nausea or vomiting. What to do: Try to rest in a cool, preferably air-conditioned, area; Loosen clothing; cool down with a shower or bath, or moisten the skin with a wet cloth; Drink plenty of non-alcoholic and caffeine-free beverages; Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen.

Heat Stroke is a life threatening condition. Heat Stroke occurs when the body is unable to control its temperature. Signs of Heat Stroke include: extremely high body temperatures (above 103 F orally), red, hot, dry skin (no sweating), rapid pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, unconsciousness. What to do: Call for immediate medical assistance; move the victim to a cool or shady area; cool the victim rapidly using whatever methods you can (immerse in a tub of water, spray with water from a garden hose); monitor the body temperature if possible to get it below 103 F.

Proper use of Fans

Daytime: Open at least two windows and point the fan in a window so it blows air out of the house. This will create an airflow through the house.

Nighttime: Turn the fan around to draw cooler air into the house.

For a fan to be effective, your skin must be moist. Moving air removes heat from the skin as the moisture evaporates cooling down the body. If a person stops sweating, as is often the case with the elderly, a fan will do no good and can make conditions worse. So it is important to keep the skin moist by using dampened clothing or by rubbing the skin with a wet cloth.

Tips for You:

- Take cool baths or showers; stay out of direct sunlight and wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothes. Use common sense and dress for the conditions!
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals. Drink water frequently – whether you feel thirsty or not.
- Spend time in an air conditioned room whenever possible. Spending 15 to 30 minute intervals in an air conditioned room can help the body tremendously.
- Seek medical help if you experience dizziness, dry skin (with no sweating), great weakness, nausea, diarrhea or vomiting. If you feel disoriented – altered consciousness or confusion, develop a throbbing headache, experience a rapid heartbeat, breathing problems, chest pains or cramps – all could be signs of heat stress.

Tips for Your Home:

- Close window coverings on the west side of the home to keep out the hot afternoon sun.
- Maintain your air conditioner! Clean indoor filters. Have a faulty unit checked out.
- To cool your house efficiently, your air conditioner needs to be cool itself. Keep it in the shade. If your air conditioner is already in the sun, you can build a wood shade screen for it — just don't block the air flow.
- If you have central air conditioning, cool only the rooms you use. But don't close all your vents. Closing too many vents actually reduces operating efficiency.
- Don't switch your air conditioner to a colder setting when you turn it on. Constantly moving the thermostat up and down throughout the day wastes energy and money. Placing the thermostat at extremes won't cool your home any faster; it only makes your system work harder.
- Set the thermostat at 78 or 80 if you are home – 85 if away. You can save three percent for every degree you raise your thermostat. Turn the air conditioner thermostat up when you leave the house for several days or longer.
- Run dishwashers, washing machines and clothes dryers early in the morning or later in the evening to reduce the effects of additional heat during the hottest part of the day.
- Remove hot, humid air from your house using exhaust fans to pull steamy air from your bathroom or kitchen.
- Use a small electric fan to improve ventilation and comfort. Use fans to blow air out of the house during daylight hours and pull cooler air into the house after dark.
- Use ceiling fans to circulate air. Most fans have a switch on the motor housing that changes the direction in which the blades turn. Be sure to set the fan direction for the appropriate season. Consult the ceiling fan user's manual for specific instructions.
- Use landscaping to provide shade for west-facing walls.
- Proper weatherstripping and caulking can prevent outside air infiltration. In addition, simple things like making certain exterior doors have a tight fit, insulating between rafters, walls and floors and in basements can make a difference.
- Consider replacing old windows. Storm or dual-glazed windows can reduce heat gain by as much as 50 percent. They often pay for themselves within five years.
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Where to go for help with the heat:

Call the Human Development Corporation at 314-535-7607 to determine if you are eligible for a free air conditioner. Eligibility is based on income and medical need.

- Provides air conditioners donated by AmerenUE and others
- Provides list of a cooling site near your zip code where you can go if you have no air conditioning

Mid-East Area Agency on Aging (636-207-0847):

- Provides transportation with one day's notice to seniors age 60 and over
- Serves St. Louis County and surrounding counties only; does not serve St. Louis City

AmerenUE's Dollar More Program

Call the United Way Operation Weather Survival Hotline for information and referral 1-800-427-4626:

Miscellaneous

Don't forget your pets! If left outside, make sure they have access to shade and have plenty of water available.

Never leave a person or a pet in a closed automobile during times of excessive heat. For an automobile sitting in full sunshine, the average increase in the air temperature is 40 Degrees F. So if the temperature outside is 95 degrees F, the temperature inside the automobile can reach at least 135 degrees F! It has been found that leaving windows partially open has little effect on the maximum temperatures.