



## Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health

# EXTREME HEAT ALERT

The **HEAT EDUCATION** and **ALERT TOOLS (HEAT)** RESPONSE

Dear Colleagues,

An extreme heat event is forecasted for your region over the next seven days. Please help prepare your patients and communities who are sensitive to heat-related illness.

**The Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health is using a tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Weather Service that forecasts a major or an extreme heat event in your region. This may put some members of your community or your patients at risk.** To help you prepare, we have provided a collection of helpful links and information focused on high-risk populations, health hazards associated with extreme heat, response strategies to extreme heat conditions, and tools to plan and prepare for future extreme heat events.

## What is Extreme Heat?

Extreme heat is a prolonged period of very hot weather, which may include high humidity. In Massachusetts, a “heat wave” is usually defined as a period of three or more consecutive days above 90 °F.

## Helping Patients and Communities Prepare

Extreme heat can be dangerous and even life-threatening if proper precautions are not taken. In extreme heat and high humidity, the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature.

Most heat-related illnesses occur because the victim has been over-exposed to heat or has over-exercised for his or her age and physical condition. Although anyone can suffer from a heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Those at greater risk include older adults, young children, and those with chronic medical conditions. To reduce the risks of extreme heat conditions, take the proper safety precautions to protect your patients and community members.

Sincerely,

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health



**Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health**

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For more information on extreme heat and health in Massachusetts, please visit:

[Climate and Health | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Climate-and-Health)

## Extreme heat and climate resources

[Extreme Heat and Poor Air Quality | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Extreme-Heat-and-Poor-Air-Quality): Learn how extreme heat affects air quality, the health effects of extreme heat, and intervention strategies to reduce the health impacts.

[Extreme Heat Safety Tips | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Extreme-Heat-Safety-Tips): Learn how to prepare for extreme heat, what to do during extreme heat, and types of heat-related illnesses.

[Cooling Centers Guidance | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Cooling-Centers-Guidance): See recommendations for municipalities in their operation of cooling centers and outlines actions municipalities may take to help prevent health impacts caused by hot weather.

[Learn About Climate Hazards | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Learn-About-Climate-Hazards): View Climate Hazard Adaption Profiles (CHAPs) that provide information about climate hazards, human exposure and health impacts, vulnerable populations, and available resources for taking action to protect health.

[Learn How Climate Change Harms Health | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Learn-How-Climate-Change-Harms-Health): Access resources, videos, and fact sheets that provide information on climate change and how it can negatively affect health.

[MassAir Online | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/MassAir-Online): Get current air quality, daily forecasts, and more

[Interactive Beach Water Quality Dashboard | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Interactive-Beach-Water-Quality-Dashboard): DPH's Interactive Beaches Dashboard provides water quality testing results for the current beach season. It will tell you which beaches are open or closed. If a beach is closed, do not swim or enter the water at that location to avoid risk of illness.

## Additional warm-weather resources

[Water Safety | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/Water-Safety): Learn water safety information on drowning, staying safe in oceans, lakes, rivers, and ponds, boating safety, tips for pool owners, and more.

[DCR Learn To Swim | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/DCR-Learn-To-Swim): Find free swimming lessons in Massachusetts for children ages 4-12.



[Mosquitoes and Ticks | mass.gov](#): Learn what Massachusetts is doing to keep you safe and how you can protect yourself and your family from mosquito and tick bites and the illnesses they can cause.

[Massachusetts Arbovirus Update | mass.gov](#): View local risk levels for Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV) based on seasonal testing.

## For Infants, Children, and Caregivers

[Heat and Infants and Children | Extreme Heat | CDC](#): Tips for protecting infants and children from heat-related illness and the effects of extreme heat.

[Pediatric Environmental Health Center | Climate Rx | Boston Children's Hospital](#): Education materials for how climate change affects your and your child's health.

[Extreme Heat: Tips to Keep Kids Safe When Temperatures Soar - HealthyChildren.org](#): Extreme heat can cause children to become sick in several ways. Make sure to protect your child from the heat as much as possible, watch for symptoms, and call your doctor if you see any develop.

## For Pregnant People

[Clinical Guidance for Heat and Pregnancy | CDC](#): CDC's clinical overview provides healthcare professionals with information about managing heat and pregnancy.

## For Older Adults

[Preparing for Extreme Heat | mass.gov](#): Extreme heat can be dangerous, especially for adults aged 65+. Follow the steps on this page to protect yourself and your loved ones during hot days.

[Hot Weather Safety for Older Adults | National Institute on Aging | NIH](#): Learn about heat-related illnesses—hyperthermia (e.g., heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and more)—and seek help for symptoms of heat stroke.

[Heat and Older Adults \(Aged 65+\) | Extreme Heat | CDC](#): People aged 65 years or older are more prone to heat-related health problems.

## For Individuals with Chronic Conditions

[Clinical Guidance for Heat and Children with Asthma | CDC](#): CDC's clinical overview provides healthcare professionals with information about how to manage heat and asthma.

[Clinical Guidance for Heat and Cardiovascular Disease | CDC](#): CDC's clinical overview provides healthcare professionals with information about how to manage heat and cardiovascular disease.

[Heat and Medications - Guidance for Clinicians | CDC](#): A summary for healthcare professionals on how heat interacts with medications.



## For Outdoor Workers

[Heat and Medications - Guidance for Clinicians | CDC](#): A summary for healthcare professionals on how heat interacts with medications.

[Heat Stress | NIOSH | CDC](#): Workers who are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments may be at risk of heat stress. Exposure to extreme heat can result in occupational illnesses and injuries.

## For Athletes:

[Heat and Athletes | Extreme Heat | CDC](#): Take steps to protect your health during extreme heat.

[Heat Illness: Keeping Youth Sports Athletes Safe | truesport.org](#): Exercising in hot and humid weather is tough on all athletes, but kids face an elevated risk of heat illness due to inexperience.

## Additional resources:

[Extreme Heat | ready.gov](#): Learn how to stay safe when extreme heat threatens. Prepare for extreme heat. Be safe during heat-related illnesses during summer break.

[Climate Change | The New England Journal of Medicine](#): Explore Climate Change articles from The New England Journal of Medicine.

[Climate Resilient Health Clinics | AmERICARES](#): The Center for Climate, Health, and the Global Environment at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (Harvard Chan C-CHANGE) and AmERICARES have collaborated to help protect people on the frontlines of the climate crisis with the Climate Resilience for Frontline Clinics project.

[Harvard Chan C-Change and AmERICARES "Establishing a Heat Action Plan" for Providers | americares.org](#): Guidance to help providers prepare for completion of the Heat Action Plan included in the toolkit with their patients.

