



Hot Weather Guidelines

AGENCIES SERVING ELDERLY/ PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Peel Health recommends the following steps
to prevent heat related illness

General Recommendations

1. Establish a policy and plan to deal with extreme temperatures (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Hot/Cold Weather protocols).
2. Ensure that staff educate elderly persons and their caregivers about how to protect their health during extreme temperatures.
3. Keep elderly persons cool and if at all possible, in an air-conditioned place. Maintain a comfortable indoor environment (within licensed facilities an emergency alert situation exists when temperature inside the building is 32 degrees Celsius or higher).
4. Limit time outdoors between 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. when temperatures and UV radiation are most intense. Some medical conditions may increase sensitivity to the heat.
5. Ensure heat and sun safety are integral parts of regular outdoor day programming. Wear UV protective sunglasses, wide-brimmed hat, and loose-fitting long shirts and pants.
6. Advise the elderly and persons with disabilities who live independently that electric fans should be used with caution. Use only if they bring in cool air from outside. Do not use if they only circulate hot air. Instead take cool showers or baths.
7. Ensure elderly/persons with disabilities are well hydrated. Plain water is the liquid of choice, or diluted fruit juice is okay.
8. Check regularly on the elderly to be sure they stay cool and well hydrated.
9. Staff should role model heat sun safety behaviours.
10. Staff should be aware of signs and symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Follow first aid procedures promptly.
11. Apply sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) 20-30 minutes before going outside to ensure absorption.
12. When using DEET insect repellent apply 20-30 minutes after the sunscreen has been applied.

During a Heat Alert

Follow the General Guidelines AND

- Activate policies and plans to deal with extreme temperatures (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Hot/Cold Weather protocols).
- Take immediate action if you find anyone exhibiting signs of heat illness - follow treatment guidelines on reverse or call 911 for anyone who exhibits signs of increased confusion and/or unresponsiveness.
- Consider suspending all outdoor activity. If residents must be outdoors, limit time spent outdoors and ensure that staff is present.
- Provide a cool area in the building such as a common room for residents to visit.
- Ensure that residents **drink lots of plain water** (the liquid of choice), or diluted juice.
- **Check residents frequently**, especially those who are physically or mentally challenged or on medications.

During an Extreme Heat Alert

Follow Heat Alert Guidelines AND

- **Check rooms** to ensure that air-conditioning is in good working order and operating effectively in all rooms. Keep an air-conditioned common room available for residents to visit.
- **Check on all residents** every one to two hours.

Check media for weather updates, visit our web site at hotweatherinpeel.ca or call Region of Peel Public Health at **905-799-7700** for heat information



HEAT ILLNESS SIGNS AND TREATMENT

Sunburn: redness, pain, swelling of skin, blisters, fever and headaches.

Treatment: leave water blisters intact to speed healing and avoid infection. If breaking of blister occurs, apply dry sterile dressing. Serious cases should be seen by a physician.

Heat Cramps: heavy sweating can cause painful muscle spasms usually in the legs but possible in the abdomen

Treatment: apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasm; give sips of water, if nausea occurs discontinue sips of water, move person to a cooler place to rest in a comfortable position. Observe the person carefully for changes in condition.

Heat Exhaustion: heavy sweating, weakness, cold, pale and clammy skin; weak pulse, fainting and vomiting, core temperature usually 38.8 Celsius or higher, but normal temperature is possible.

Treatment: get person out of sun, move person to a cooler environment, lay person down and loosen clothing, apply cool wet cloths, give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue sips of water; if vomiting continues, seek immediate medical attention.

Heatstroke: severe medical emergency, high body temperature (41 degrees Celsius or higher), hot, dry skin, rapid and strong pulse, possible unconsciousness

Treatment: **Call 911, if unable to get person to medical help immediately, do the following:**

- Move person to a cooler environment
- Remove outer clothing
- Reduce body temperature using lukewarm(not cold) water to bathe/sponge the person
- Do not give fluids

Check media for weather updates, visit our web site at hotweatherinpeel.ca or call Region of Peel Public Health at **905-799-7700** for heat information