

Prepare for Extreme Heat: A Guide for People Who Use Substances

An extreme heat event can be dangerous to your health.

Substances can make you more sensitive to extreme heat.

- **Stimulants** (cocaine, crack, or meth) can increase your body temperature and make it harder to cool off.
- **Opioids** (heroin, fentanyl) can make it hard to feel hot and take action to protect yourself.

Symptoms from extreme heat can last a long time.

- People usually experience health effects during a heatwave, but some people might have symptoms that last weeks or months.

It is important to be prepared for extreme heat events.

Make an extreme heat kit

- Bottled water
- Cups
- Large basins or water jugs
- Ice packs and ice
- Containers to hold ice
- Towels
- Sunscreen
- Fruit and vegetables
- Taxi vouchers
- Tin foil
- Misting bottles
- Take Home Naloxone kits
- First aid supplies
- Lightweight clothing
- Indoor and body thermometers

**There may be barriers to getting these supplies.
Find what you can and reach out for support.**

Make a plan

- Know where to get drinking water.
- Find cooling centres, public places with A/C, or outdoor shaded areas if possible.
- If you have A/C, check that it works.
- Talk with neighbours and friends and plan to check on each other.
- Gather enough harm reduction supplies.
- Ask a pharmacist:
 - If any of your medicine will affect how your body handles extreme heat,
 - if you can get extended carries to last through the heat and a few days after.

Know when to get medical help

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke

You might feel:

- Dizzy
- Thirsty
- Very sweaty
- Nausea
- Weakness

Heat stroke can cause disability or death

You might feel:

- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness

For both heat exhaustion and heat stroke: **ACT FAST**

- Move to a cooler area
- Cool off with water or ice
- Loosen clothing and remove layers



**Heat stroke is a medical emergency!
Call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention!**

Extreme heat and mental health

Extreme heat for several days can affect mental health.

Get medical care for more:

- Irritability
- Psychological distress
- Aggression or violence
- Suicidal thoughts