

# A Message for Families

## **Protecting Kids from Extreme Heat and Poor Air Quality this Summer**

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As you gear up for summertime, remember to protect kids from extreme heat and poor air quality.

High heat and humid weather bring a risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Both are serious health conditions that can cause very serious health problems. Children are at higher risk of these heat-related illnesses. Poor air quality is also important to consider, as kids are at a higher risk of health effects from this too. Here are some ways to prepare for extreme heat and poor air quality conditions this summer.

### **Heat**

During times of extreme heat, parents and caregivers are encouraged to:

- **Keep your child hydrated**
- **Keep your home cool**
- **Avoid exposing your child to extreme heat**

Find more tips in this Health Canada resource: [Keep Children Cool! Protect your Child from Extreme Heat](#). Or visit your local health unit website:

- Peterborough Public Health: [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/extremeheat](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/extremeheat)
- HKPR: [www.hkpr.on.ca/extremeheat](http://www.hkpr.on.ca/extremeheat)
- Durham: [durham.ca/heat](http://durham.ca/heat)

To prepare for times of extreme heat, parents and caregivers are also encouraged to:

#### **Be More Aware**

- of the local weather by downloading a mobile app (such as [WeatherCAN - Canada.ca](http://WeatherCAN-Canada.ca)), or listening to the radio, etc.
- of your family's personal health risks to extreme heat or others in your care
- of the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness
  - signs of heat illness can look different in babies and children compared to adults. Signs may include sleepiness or temper tantrums.
- of practical strategies to stay cool during extreme heat. Refer to the Heat Hacks Resource for tips and guidance at [durham.ca/heathacks](http://durham.ca/heathacks)

#### **Have a Plan**

- to keep cool (i.e., consider cooler spaces in your home or the community where you could spend time)
- to stay hydrated (i.e., how can you ensure access to drinking water, especially if power outages occur)
- to stay connected (i.e., reach out to elderly neighbours, friends, and family with phone calls, video chats, or visits.)
- to have adequate supplies of required medications for those with chronic health conditions

### **Air Quality**

Air quality can worsen during times of extreme heat. The spread of smoke from wildfires across Canada has also led to poor air quality in recent weeks. Stay up to date on local air quality by monitoring the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at [airqualityontario.com](http://airqualityontario.com). Being aware of these conditions will help your family plan outdoor activities accordingly.

Wildfire smoke can harm everyone's health, even at low concentrations. Air quality health index readings **change** throughout the day. Anyone with medical conditions should be aware of poor air quality. Seek advice from health care providers as needed. To learn more about wildfire, visit: [Wildfire Smoke, Air Quality and Your Health \(Canada.ca\)](#). When extreme heat and poor air quality occur together, prioritize keeping cool, as overheating can be more dangerous to your health. Learn more at [Wildfire Smoke With Extreme Heat \(Canada.ca\)](#).

By taking these precautions, you can help protect your family's health this summer.

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