

A Checklist for Home Health Care Workers

Home Care Workers, Medical Case Managers, Caregivers

Use the checklist to identify who is most likely to get sick from the heat, how to help them stay cool, and what resources are available during extreme heat events.

For more information on heat safety, visit www.phila.gov/heat.

Who Is Most At-Risk?

Some of your patients or loved ones may be more likely to get sick during very hot weather, and some may have multiple risk factors:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who work outside | <input type="checkbox"/> People who are homebound |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People experiencing homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> Older adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletes | <input type="checkbox"/> Infants and young children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People without A/C | <input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People who live alone | <input type="checkbox"/> People with some chronic medical conditions |

How Can You Check on Your Patients?

On your home visit, observe how your patient can stay cool, adjust their care routine, and prevent their home from becoming too hot during extreme heat:

- Patient follows up with medical provider about how extreme heat impacts their diet, fluid, and medication intake (i.e., fluid and/or salt restrictions).
- Patient's medications are stored properly throughout the summer.
- Patient lives alone and has someone who knows to check on them during extreme heat.
- Patient is wearing loose fitting clothing, made from breathable fabric (e.g., cotton).
- Patient is staying hydrated and drinking cool water or fruit juice throughout the day. Note: caffeine, alcohol, and sugary drinks can cause dehydration.
- Patient avoids using an oven or stove during very hot weather.
- Patient closes curtains or blinds during the hottest part of the day (typically 10am–4pm) to block direct sunlight and avoid heating up the home.
- Patient opens windows when it's cooler outside than indoors to help regulate indoor temperature.
- Patient has access to an electric fan to help circulate cool air. Note: fans will not prevent heat-related illness in temperatures greater than 95°F.
- Patient uses a/c and is able to afford increases in electricity bills over the summer. Using a/c is the best way to stay safe at home during extreme heat.
- Patient does not have or does not use a/c. You have asked them why and discussed options to make a/c more accessible to them, such as utility assistance or an alternative location.
- Patient has access to transportation to go somewhere else when it is very hot, if they do not have a/c. If so, where:
 - A family member or friend's home with a/c.
 - A library, senior center, or other public space with a/c.
 - Another location: _____
- Patient knows where the closest cooling site is and how to check if it is open during an extreme heat event. (Call 311 or visit bit.ly/PHLHeatSafety).

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness?

Exposure to extreme heat can make some people extremely sick and make some chronic conditions worse. Note if your patient is experiencing any of the following signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and respond appropriately.

Heat Stroke

- Very high body temperature (103 F or higher)
- Confusion
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Pounding headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Losing consciousness

Heat stroke is an emergency. Call 911.

Heat Exhaustion

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle Cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Headache
- Fainting

Cool down immediately and seek medical attention if the person does not feel better after one hour.

How Can You Plan to Keep Patients Safe?

To help keep patients and loved ones safe and healthy this summer, ensure your home or your organization has a plan, stays informed, and shares resources about available services.

- Sign up for [Ready Philadelphia](#): To receive free text alerts to your phone on emergencies and severe weather, text “[ReadyPhila](#)” to [888-777](#). Alerts are now available in eleven languages.
- Enroll in the PDPH Community Response Partner Network at bit.ly/CRPNnewsletters to receive notifications when the City declares a Heat Health Emergency and details about public health emergencies in Philadelphia.

During a Heat Health Emergency, the following services are activated:

- The [Philadelphia Corporation for Aging’s Heatline](#) is open for calls. Any Philadelphia resident can call [\(215\) 765-9040](#) to get safety tips and talk to medical professionals to discuss health issues.
- City-operated [cooling centers](#) are open for extended hours. Cooling centers are air conditioned public spaces like libraries, senior centers, and recreation centers. Call [311](#) or go to bit.ly/PHLHeatSafety for cooling center locations.
- Philadelphia’s power utility company PECO [halts utility shut-offs](#). For the duration of the Heat Health Emergency, PECO will not turn off the power of customers’ homes due to unpaid bills.

- Each spring, prepare and train staff on heat-related illness, heat safety and essential resources.
- Notify patients when extreme heat is in the forecast.
- Provide patients with educational materials, including the PDPH Heat Brochure, available at bit.ly/PHPmaterials.
- Provide patients with utility assistance information early in the season, so they can prepare to afford air conditioning. Offer the summer utility assistance flyer, available at bit.ly/PHPmaterials.