

Preventing Heat-Related Illness

A Checklist for Prescribing Providers

Doctors, Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Office Managers

This checklist is a practical guide for healthcare providers to proactively identify, educate, and protect patients who are vulnerable to the health impacts of extreme heat.

Use this document to identify those most at risk, assist patients with taking preventive actions to reduce the risk of heat-related illness, and help your practice prepare patients for dangerously hot weather.

Make Your Office Extreme Heat Aware

- **Prepare the Practice:** Sign office managers up for ReadyPhiladelphia so they can be up to date with heat events, sign up for the Health Alert Network at bit.ly/PhillyHealthAlerts where healthcare providers can receive critical health information from PDPH, consider offering telehealth visits, and create a .ExtremeHeat smartphrase to assist with documentation.
- **Identify At-Risk Patients:** Flag charts for patients in heat-vulnerable neighborhoods using the heat vulnerability index and send them heat safety and air quality tips via MyChart alerts or text messaging.
- **Educate and Inform:** Display posters and educational materials on extreme heat, utility assistance, and seasonal services. Materials available at bit.ly/PHPCommunityResources.

Patient Risk Assessment

Some of your patients may be more prone to experiencing adverse health effects due to extremely hot weather and some may have multiple risk factors:

Chronic conditions impacted by extreme heat

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| ☐ Diabetes | ☐ Respiratory Disease (e.g. asthma, COPD) |
| ☐ Kidney Disease | ☐ Heart Disease |
| ☐ Mental Health Conditions | ☐ Obesity |

Medications and substances that may affect heat tolerance

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| ☐ Diuretics | ☐ Antipsychotics |
| ☐ Beta-blockers | ☐ SSRIs / SNRIs |
| ☐ ACE inhibitors | ☐ Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCAs) |
| ☐ Calcium channel blockers | ☐ Lithium |
| ☐ Antiplatelets (e.g. aspirin or clopidogrel) | ☐ Antiseizure medications (e.g. topiramate, carbamazepine) |
| ☐ Antihistamines (e.g. diphenhydramine, doxylamine) | ☐ Analgesics (e.g. aspirin, NSAIDs, acetaminophen) |
| ☐ Levothyroxine | ☐ Antibiotics and antiretrovirals (e.g. sulfonamides, Indinavir) |
| ☐ Opioids (e.g. heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone) | ☐ Meth, amphetamines, cocaine |
| ☐ Alcohol | ☐ MDMA |

Priority populations affected by extreme heat

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|---|--|
| ☐ Low income or housing insecure | ☐ People with disabilities or mobility issues |
| ☐ People experiencing homelessness | ☐ Older adults (65 years old or greater) |
| ☐ Athletes | ☐ Infants and young children |
| ☐ People without A/C at home | ☐ Pregnant people |
| ☐ People who live alone | ☐ People who work outside |
| ☐ People who use drugs (PWUD) | ☐ People without AC at work |

Resources for patients to stay safe

Medical & Chronic Condition Support

- Heat and Chronic Illness brochure – educational resource for patients with asthma, heart disease, or other chronic illnesses affected by heat.
- CHOP Community Asthma Prevention Program – Call 215-590-5261 for resources for families with children who have asthma.
- Medical Delay Program- providers can submit a request to prevent water shut-offs for patients who need water for medical reasons. Call 215-685-630 or visit bit.ly/PreventWaterShutOff.

Heat Safety Information & Alerts

- Patients can sign up for Ready Philadelphia to receive free text alerts about emergencies and severe weather. Text “ReadyPhila” to 888-777. Alerts are available in eleven languages.
- PCA Helpline – Call 215-765-9040 for services and assistance for older adults. Any Philadelphia resident can call 215-765-9040 to get safety tips and talk to medical professionals to discuss health issues during a heat health emergency.
- Check outdoor conditions. Visit bit.ly/AirQualityPHL or use any weather app to check air quality, humidity levels, and temperature.

Cooling Locations & Access

- Cooling Centers – open for extended hours during a heat health emergency. Call 3-1-1 or visit bit.ly/PHLHeatSafety. Libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, malls, museums, or friends’ homes with AC are everyday options to stay cool.
- Free Public Pools – visit phila.gov/ppr.
- Spray Grounds – visit bit.ly/SpraygroundFinder

Transportation Access- Affordable, accessible transportation

- SEPTA Key Senior Fare Card – free rides for ages 65+. Call: 215-580-7145 (option 6)
- SEPTA Access Program – program provides paratransit service for individuals with disabilities and senior citizens. Call 215-580-7800 or visit septa.org/access/

Financial, Housing & Utility Assistance

- UESF Utility Assistance Program- stabilizes housing for families; provides case management, financial assistance, referrals, resources, educational workshops, benefit screenings. Call 215 -814-6837 or visit uesfacts.org.
- BenePhilly connects residents with non-income-based benefits to help afford costs such as prescriptions, utilities, disability benefits, and more. Call 800-994-5537 or visit bit.ly/BenePhilly.
- Neighborhood Energy Centers helps residents weatherize homes, understand utility bills, and connect with assistance. Visit bit.ly/NeighborhoodEnergyCenters.
- Water Shutoff Protection- Patients can request 30-day protection, a payment plan, or check eligibility for the Raise Your Hand exemption at bit.ly/PreventWaterShutOff.

Home Environment

- Energy Coordinating Agency – support for year-round home weatherization and HVAC repair. Call 215-609-1000.
- Fans & Air Conditioning: Advise patients to use a fan or window AC unit in at least one room where they can cool down, if possible. Remind them not to rely only on fans when temperatures are very high (above 90°F).

Mental Health & Crisis Support

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – call or text 988.