Are you at risk for heat illness at home?

Keeping your family and yourself safe in the heat
Assessing and Reducing Your Risk of Heat-related Illness in Your Home and Community

Everyone knows that when you work outside on hot days you are at risk for heat-related illness. Working on farms or at other outside jobs during hot weather increases your likelihood of getting sick from the heat. But you may also be at risk for heat-related illness at home. This booklet is designed to help you assess if you are at risk in your home or neighborhood, and to help you reduce your risk.

Go through these lists, starting with your home, and check the boxes that apply. By doing this you should be able to determine what factors affect your risk level. The key to reducing your risk is keeping cool and hydrated.

Keep Cool at Home

Inside your house, there are several ways to keep cool.

- **A cool bath or shower** can be one of the best ways to reduce your body temperature. Immersing your body in a cool bath will reduce your body heat faster than a shower.

  - Shower
    - present
    - absent
    - not functional

  - Bath
    - present
    - absent
    - not functional

- **Open your windows if it is hotter in your house** than it is outside and you feel safe doing so. If you have windows on both or all sides of the house, open them all to create a breeze.

  - Windows
    - present
    - absent
    - not functional

- **Curtains over the windows on the sunny side** of your house can help keep your rooms cooler during the heat of the day. These curtains need to be thick enough to block the sunlight. If you don’t have curtains, blankets work better than sheets for this and need to be as fully closed as possible. It is especially important to cover east and south facing windows during the day.

  - Curtains
    - present
    - absent
    - not functional
• **Air conditioning** is a very effective way to cool off at the end of the day. You can use window units in a specific room or central air conditioning.

![Air Conditioning]

- present
- absent
- not functional

• **The roof of your residence** is a key location for both increasing heat and reducing it. Ideally, the attic or space next to your roof should be insulated. If you have a choice of living on the top floor of an apartment building or one of the lower floors, you will stay cooler if you are on one of the lower floors.

![Floor of Residence]

- ground floor
- upper floor
- residence with one level

• **Fans are effective** if they are moving cool air into a location of hot air. So if the air outside is cooler than the air inside, a fan can be used near a window to move that cool air into a hot residence, cooling it off.

![Fans]

- present
- absent
- not functional

The position of windows in your residence has a big impact on how hot your home will get throughout the day.

• **Seek a house with windows on the east or north** sides of the building if you can.

![Windows]

- East or North facing
- South or West facing
- Both

• **If you live in a trailer, situate your trailer** so that the windows are not exposed to the sun during the hottest part of the day.
Find or Create Shade

Cooler temperatures outside your residence can make it cooler inside. When the temperature outside cools down, you can open the windows to lower the temperature of the air inside. And there are ways to make it cooler outside your home, too.

- **Mature trees and lawn with lots of shade** surrounding a house or apartment are the ideal.
- If you live in a trailer, look for a space with mature trees creating shade.

If there are no trees where you live, there are other ways to find or create cooling shade.

- **Permanent shade structures like porches or balconies** are a feature of many houses and apartment buildings. If these places are cooler than the inside of your residence, they can be used to cool off.

- **Temporary shade structures** can be set up using tarps, shade cloth or other materials if there are no permanent shade structures near or at your residence.
Keep Cool in Your Neighborhood and in Your Community

If there is nothing you can do to cool off after a hot day in the fields, you need to know where you can go to cool off. There are several choices.

Most counties in California where there is the possibility of extreme heat have emergency heat plans. In extreme heat conditions, the government makes announcements on the radio. In many agricultural communities, the fairgrounds are designated cooling centers during an emergency.

And there are other places you can go to cool off that may be closer and easier for you to reach. Some of these are listed below. On the next page is a sheet you can fill out to keep your family informed about where to go when they are hot.

Check the places on this list that are near your residence.

- Parks with trees, grass and cool water
- Shops with air conditioning
- Public swimming pools
- Community centers
- Schools
- Churches
- Government buildings
- Clinics or hospitals
- Shopping malls
**Where to Stay Safe and Cool in Your Community**
Fill this out and post it in your home for your family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where is the closest building with air conditioning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the closest park with shade trees?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the closest public swimming pool?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can I get cool water to drink?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do I go in an emergency?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the closest county-designated cooling center?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where is the closest bus stop?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services number: 911</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local taxi service number:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends or relatives to call in an emergency:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information on this project, contact:

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website: www.cirsonc.org

To download copies of this publication or the *CIRS Heat Resource Guide*, go to:
www.cirsonc.org

For a list of cooling centers in your region, visit the website for your county. Many California counties also have an emergency phone alert system for residents and you may be able to sign up online.

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