

Australian Medical Association Limited

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



STAY SAFE DURING HEATWAVES AND LOOK OUT FOR PEOPLE SUFFERING HEAT EXHAUSTION

As much of Australia experiences record heat conditions, the AMA advises people to avoid direct sunlight and try to be out at night when it’s cooler.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said today that it is critical people take exceptional care to keep hydrated, cool, and away from the sun during heatwaves.

“Hot weather can take a major toll on health, and in some cases even lead to death,” Dr Bartone said.

“In extreme heat, it’s easy to become dehydrated or for your body to overheat, and the risk is especially high for children, the elderly, people with chronic illness, people who work outdoors, and pets.

“Heatwave conditions result in more presentations at hospital emergency departments, more chronic ill-health, and an increase in drownings and water-related accidents as people seek respite in the ocean and rivers.

“Last summer was the warmest on record, according to the Bureau of Meteorology.

“Many parts of Australia have experienced or are still experiencing extreme heat, and more heatwaves are expected again this holiday season.

“We’re cautioning all Australians to follow the advice of the Bureau of Meteorology and medical practitioners in extreme heat conditions.

“Avoid direct sunlight, don’t go outside unless you must, and avoid being outside during the hottest times of the day.

“Make sure you drink plenty of liquids to stay hydrated and wear loose-fitting lightweight clothing.”

Signs of heat exhaustion can include:

- dizziness and confusion;
- headaches;
- loss of appetite;
- excessive sweating and pale, clammy skin;
- feeling cramps in your arms, legs, and stomach;
- body temperature rising to 38 degrees or above; and
- being very thirsty.

If someone exhibits signs of heat exhaustion, they need to be cooled down urgently. Help them with the following steps:

- Move them to a cool place.
- Get them to lie down and raise their feet slightly.
- Ensure they drink plenty of water (sports or rehydration drinks can be provided).
- Spray or sponge them with cool water.

- Place a fan on them, and put cold packs around the armpits or neck.
 - Stay with them until they're better, which usually happens within 30 minutes.
-

19 December 2019

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: http://twitter.com/ama_media

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Follow *Australian Medicine* on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/amaausmed>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>