

Heat Plan Summary

Summer heat in San Antonio can become more than a nuisance for many individuals. Excessive heat can pose a public health threat, causing serious adverse health effects, or even death.

To address these threats, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, in conjunction with the Office of Emergency Management of San Antonio and Bexar County and the National Weather Service, developed a heat plan to increase public awareness and lessen health risks during periods of excessive heat.

The heat plan includes the following levels to describe heat conditions, identify risks associated with elevated temperatures and explain possible outcomes:

Community Resources for Excessive Heat Events

	Heat conditions	Health effects	Action steps
Level IV	Normal weather conditions	Fatigue possible, after prolonged exposure.	Metro Health conducts heat plan awareness campaign to inform the public of risks and prevention tools in preparing for extreme heat conditions.
Level III	Metro Health will issue a “Heat Outlook” when temperatures reach 100°F or higher, or when the heat index is expected to reach between 90°F to 108°F range for two consecutive days.	Sunstroke, heat cramps or heat exhaustion possible with prolonged exposure.	Hospitals begin passive surveillance to report heat illnesses to Metro Health.
Level II	Metro Health will issue a “Heat Advisory” when the daytime heat index greater than 108°F or air temperature greater than 103°F.	Sunstroke, heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely and heat stroke possible with prolonged exposure.	Information regarding existing cooling locations will be made available.
Level I	When the heat index reaches 113°F or higher or air temperature higher than 105 °F Metro Health concludes that “Heat Advisory” standards have been exceeded, Metro Health will issue an “Excessive Heat Warning.”	Heat, sunstroke highly likely with continued exposure.	Shelters and daytime cooling locations hours adjusted based on demand. Overnight location will open at: Haven for Hope Daytime locations: local malls, public libraries, senior centers nutrition sites, learning and leadership development centers, public gyms and swimming pools.

Organization	Phone	Details
City Public Service (CPS) Customer Service Line	210-353-2222	Financial assistance with utility bills
Bexar County Dept. of Community Resources	210-335-6770	Utility Assistance Energy Crisis Program
San Antonio Water System (SAWS)	210-704-7297	Financial planning assistance with water bills
City of San Antonio Center for Working Families	210-207-7830	Financial assistance
Humane Society San Antonio	210-226-7461	Tips for your pets
City of San Antonio Animal Care Services 4710 State Highway 151, San Antonio, 78227	210-207-4PET	Tips for your pets
City of San Antonio 311 Line	3-1-1	Report Animal Cruelty
City of San Antonio Dept. of Human Services 106 S. St. Mary's, 7th Floor San Antonio, TX 78205	210-207-7172	Information on Senior Services
211 Texas/United Way Help Line	2-1-1	Request a portable fan, PROJECT COOL
Alamo Service Connection Bexar Area Agency on Aging	210-477-3275	Cool Neighbor Campaign-Door Hanger and Thermometer explaining Heat Related signs and symptoms. Information and referrals for seniors over age 60 for utility assistance and home weatherization programs

Preventing Heat Injuries

When the heat index is high, it's best to stay in an air-conditioned environment. If you must go outdoors, you can prevent heat stroke by taking these steps:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Use a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more.
- Drink extra fluids. To prevent dehydration, it's generally recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water, fruit juice, or vegetable juice per day. Because heat-related illness also can result from salt depletion, it may be advisable to substitute an electrolyte-rich sports drink for water during periods of extreme heat and humidity.
- Take additional precautions when exercising or working outdoors. The general recommendation is to drink 24 ounces of fluid two hours before exercise, and consider adding another 8 ounces of water or sports drink right before exercise. During exercise, you should consume another 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Reschedule or cancel outdoor activity. If possible, shift your time outdoors to the coolest times of the day, either early morning or after sunset.

Other strategies for preventing heat stroke include:

- Monitoring the color of your urine. Darker urine is a sign of dehydration. Be sure to drink enough fluids to maintain very light-colored urine.
- Measuring your weight before and after physical activity. Monitoring lost water weight can help you determine how much fluid you need to drink.

Avoid fluids containing caffeine or alcohol, because both substances can make you lose more fluids and worsen heat-related illness. Also, do not take salt tablets unless your doctor has told you to do so. The easiest and safest way to replace salt and other electrolytes during heat waves is to drink sports beverages or fruit juice.

Check with your doctor before increasing liquid intake if you have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restricted diets; or have a problem with fluid retention.

If you live in an apartment or house without fans or air conditioning, try to spend at least two hours each day -- preferably during the hottest part of the day -- in an air-conditioned environment. At home, draw your curtains, shades, or blinds during the hottest part of the day, and open windows at night on two sides of your building to create cross-ventilation.

For hours and locations of **Cooling Centers** click on link below:

<http://www.saoemprepare.com/BelInformed/NaturalDisasters/Heat/CoolingCenters>