



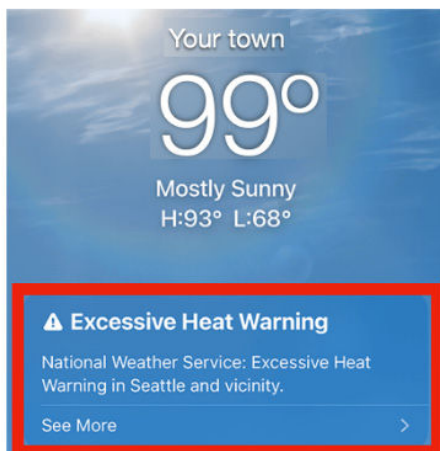
Tip Sheet for Patients with Cardiovascular Disease

Staying Safe When It's Hot Outside

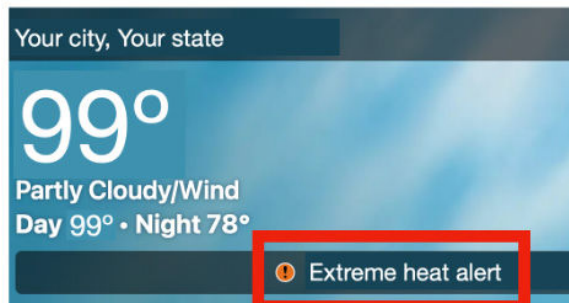
Hot days can make it harder to stay healthy if you have cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart failure, a history of heart attack, or atrial fibrillation. People with cardiovascular disease can easily get dehydrated and overheat. Some medicines used to treat cardiovascular disease, like diuretics (“water pills”), can also make it harder to stay hydrated during hot weather. Follow these tips to stay cool and safe.

- 1. Know when high temperatures may put your health at risk.** To get your local forecast, use your phone’s weather app or go to [weather.com](https://www.weather.com) and type your town or zip-code in the search box at the top of the screen. Look for a heat advisory or warning.

Phone weather app



weather.com



Weather alerts will appear in areas outlined in red (including heat advisories and heat warnings)

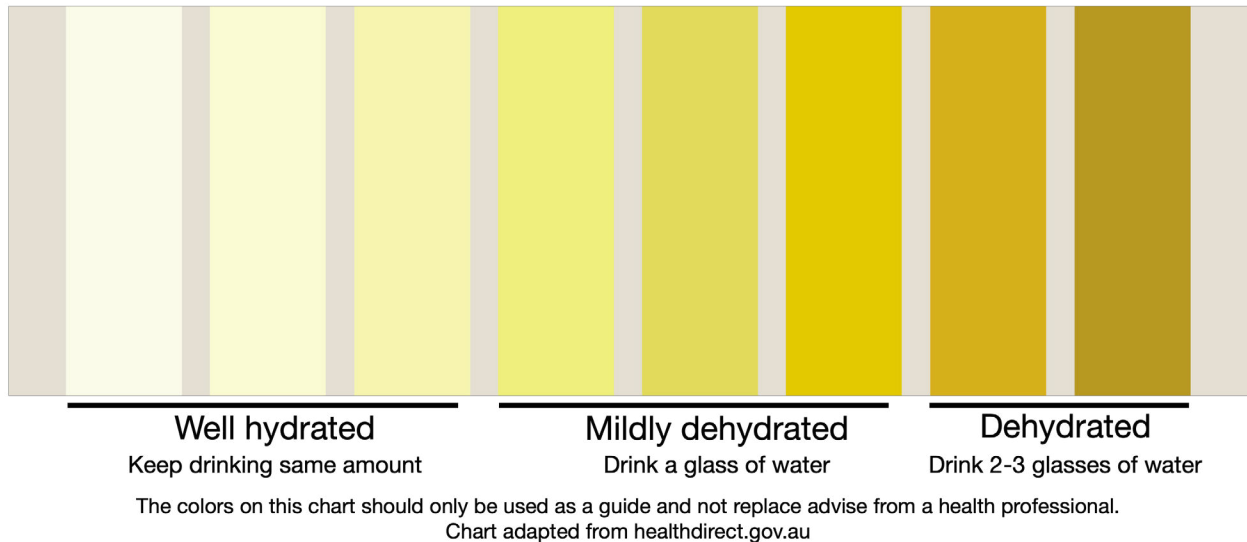
You can also tune in to your local weather forecast on TV or radio and listen for an announcement of a heat advisory or extreme heat warning.

If you feel hot, even if there is not a heat advisory or heat warning, use the following tips to stay safe.

- 2. Drink to help your body handle heat.** Avoid sugary drinks, alcohol and caffeine in coffee, tea, energy drinks, and some sports drinks that have high amounts of sugar and/or caffeine. Eat light, easy-to-digest foods, such as fruit or salads.

For most people, when your urine is light yellow or clear, you are well hydrated. If your urine is dark, you need to drink more (see chart below). However, if you are on dialysis, or take diuretics (i.e., water pills) talk with your provider about how much water you should drink when it gets hot outside.

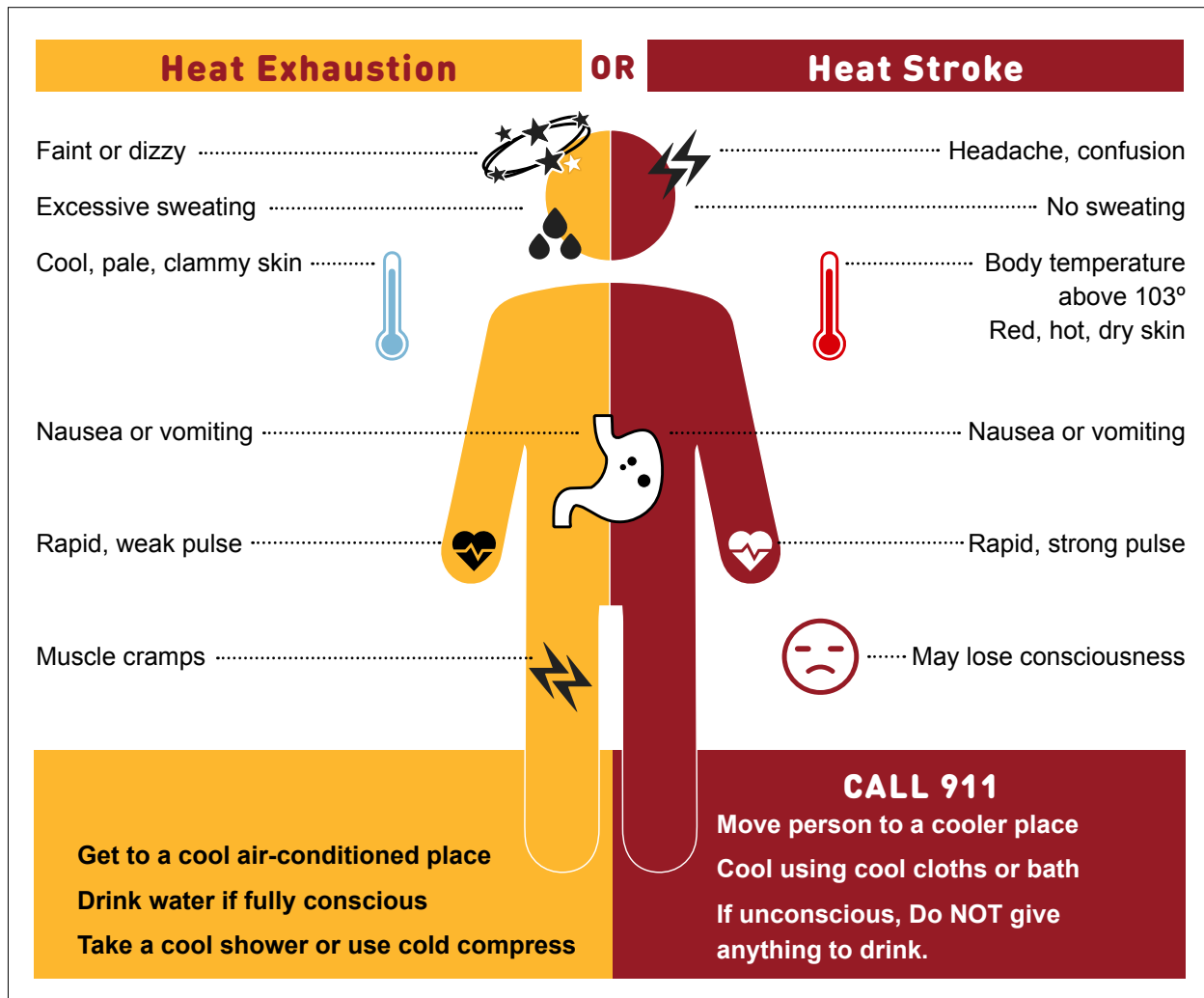
Urine color chart to assess hydration



- 3. Take your medicines as prescribed unless your provider tells you not to.** Many medicines may affect your body's ability to deal with heat. These include medicines for high blood pressure (ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers/ARBs, or beta blockers), medicines for depression and anxiety (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors/SSRIs), or antipsychotics such as quetiapine (Seroquel), risperidone (Risperdal), and olanzapine (Zyprexa), among others. If you are taking any of these, make sure you are following the rest of the tips on this sheet to keep yourself cool and safe.
- 4. Use cool water on your body: take a cool bath or shower or dampen cloths for a sponge bath.** Fans can become less effective at cooling you down above 95°F (especially in low humidity settings). However, if you wet your skin with a wet towel or spray bottle while using the fan, they can be a cost-effective way to stay cool.
- 5. Do outdoor activities when temperatures are lower, usually before 11 am or after 6 pm.** If you work outdoors, or near a heat source such as a grill, furnace, or boiler, take frequent breaks to rest and rehydrate in a shaded or air-conditioned area, and discuss a heat safety plan with your employer.
- 6. Dress for success.** Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing. Wear sunscreen and a hat when you're outside.

7. Know where to go to stay cool. If you cannot keep the temperature in your home below around 80°F, know where you will go to stay safe when it gets hot outside. This could be a neighbor’s home, a place of worship, a community center, a local building designated as a cooling center, or even a shaded area in a local park.

8. Know the signs when your body is telling you it’s too hot. See the figure below for what to do when your body gets too hot.



Adapted from the National Weather Service and U.S. CDC

9. Complete a Heat Action Plan before the weather gets hot outside. Ask your provider to review the Heat Action Plan handout at your next appointment.