



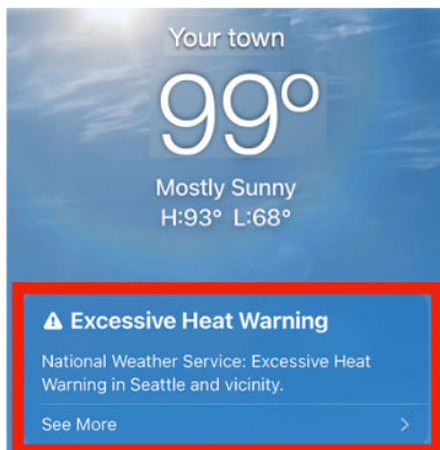
Tip Sheet for Patients with Mental Health Disorders

Staying Safe When It's Hot Outside

Hot days can bring out symptoms of mental health disorders. It can also be harder to sleep when it is hot, and sleep deprivation makes us irritable and can also worsen symptoms of mental health disorders. In addition, many medications used to treat mental health disorders can make it harder for your body to control its temperature when it is hot outside. Follow these tips to stay 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)

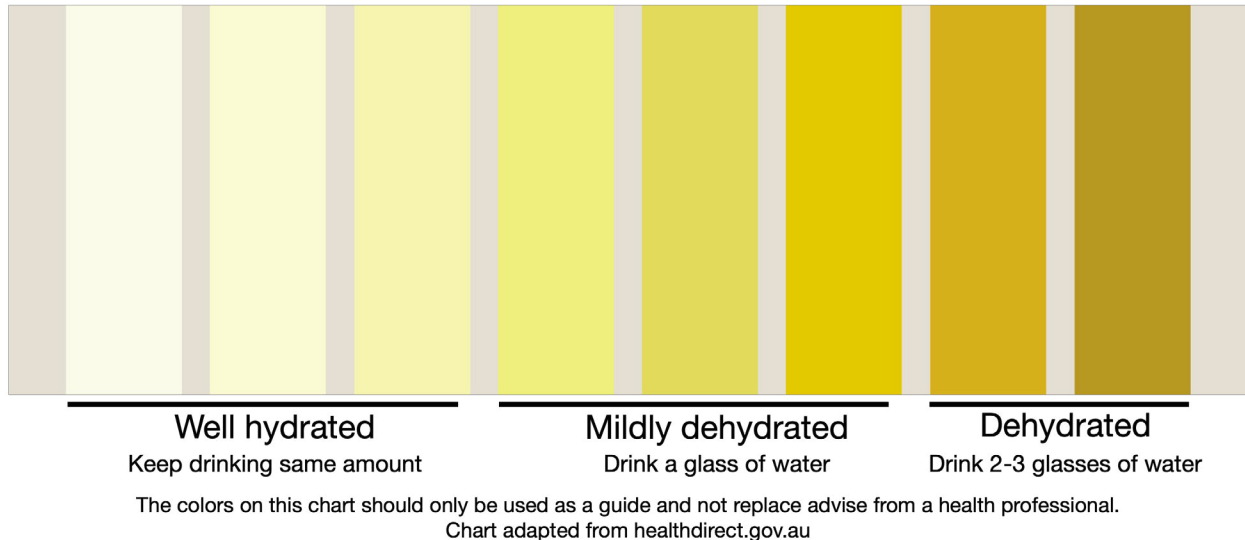
You can also tune in to your local weather forecast on TV or radio and listen for an announcement of a heat advisory or extreme heat warning.

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). 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



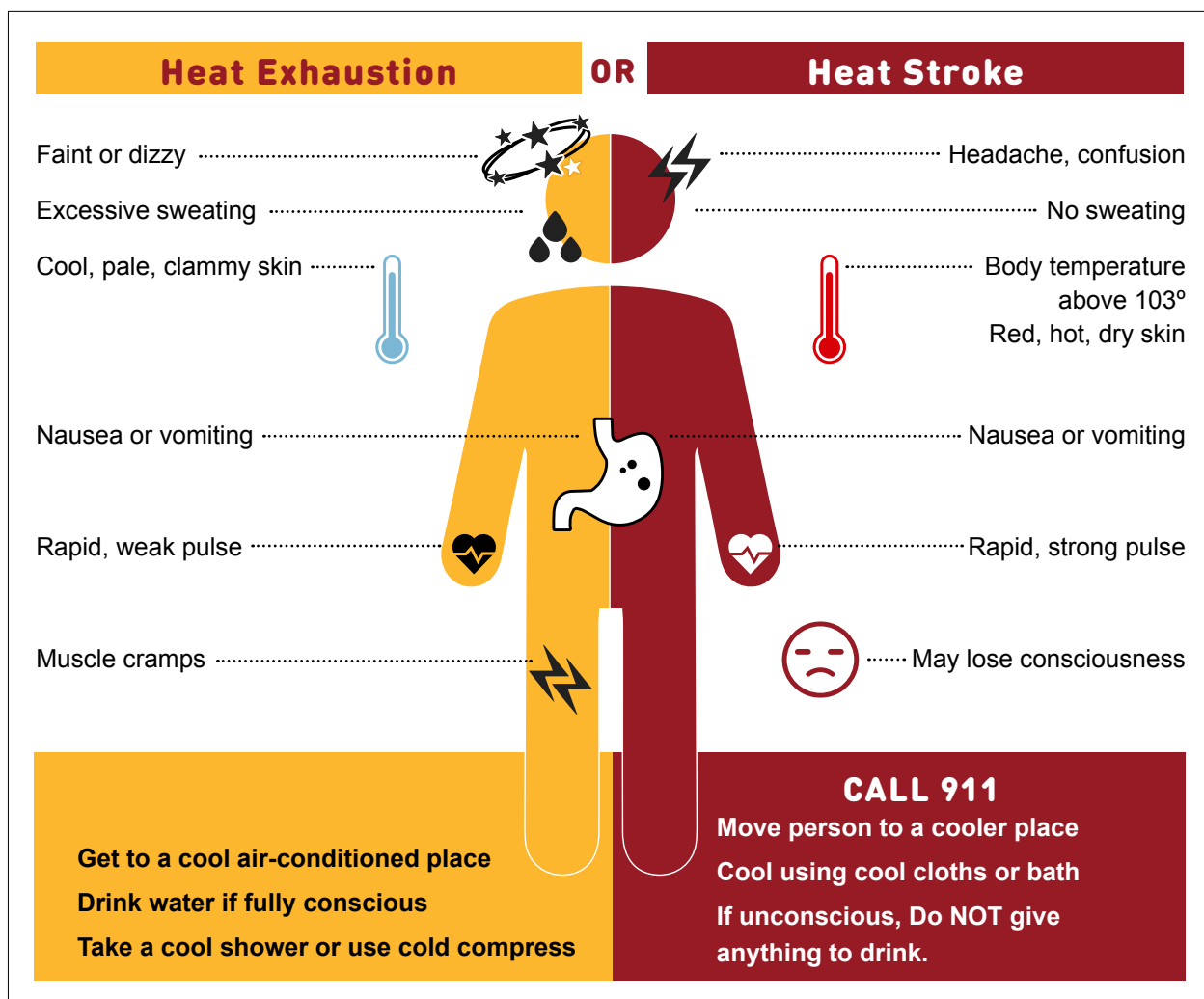
It is especially important to drink plenty of water during hot weather if you are taking any antipsychotic medication. See tip 3 below for more information.

- 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 depression and anxiety (such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors/SSRIs, serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors/SNRIs, tricyclic antidepressants/TCAs), antipsychotics such as quetiapine (Seroquel), risperidone (Risperdal), and olanzapine (Zyprexa), as well as medicines for high blood pressure (ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers/ARBs, or beta blockers), 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, as sunburns can make it harder to stay cool.

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 if your body is 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.