

# 5 Steps to Ready

The effects of climate change are here, and so are the health challenges caused by extreme weather. Heat waves are among the most dangerous disasters. Protect yourself and your family with these easy steps.

## 1. Make a plan

- Know where you'll go to cool down if you don't have air conditioning or the power goes out. Public cooling centers, public libraries, shopping malls and movie theaters could be options.
- If possible, buy a generator in case of power outages.
- If you rely on electricity-dependent medical equipment, identify a battery-powered alternative, or identify a location with power where you could relocate during a power outage.
- Identify people in your family and community at higher risk from extreme heat [list can be found here], and check on them regularly.
- Consider purchasing a generator in case of power outages. There are additional details to keep in mind such as generator maintenance, carbon monoxide, safe fuel storage, installing a generator switch, and ensuring your generator is the right size.

## 2. Build a kit

- Bring water more water than you think you need when spending time outdoors or using public transportation. Vacuum sealed reusable water bottles can help keep water cool.
- Keep drinking water on hand. If possible, keep the water refrigerated or frozen.
- Bring bottled water when using public transportation or spending time outdoors.
- Keep fans in the house, including battery-powered fans in case of power outages. Using a fan when the air temperature is higher than your body temperature (>95F) can actually make you hotter. However, by combining skin wetting (wet cloths, mister, wet clothing) fans facilitate evaporation and will help you stay cool.

## 3. Keep at least seven days of medication on hand

- If the medications you take require refrigeration, talk with your pharmacist or provider about what you should do if you lose power.
- Talk with your pharmacist or provider about whether any of your medications could impair your ability to stay cool, and actions you can take to reduce this risk.
- Certain medical conditions can decrease the body's ability to regulate temperature and sweat. Check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out if you may be more at higher risk for heat illness.

## 4. Prepare to stay cool

- If you have an air conditioning system, replace the filters to help prevent it from failing.
- Wear loose, lightweight and light-colored clothing, and remember cool, damp cloths can help draw heat from the body.
- Avoid strenuous activities and, as much as possible, limit time outside.

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- If you must perform activities outdoors, drink plenty of water, pace yourself, and take frequent breaks in cool, shaded or air conditioned areas.
- Drink plenty of water and electrolytes if you are sweating profusely. If possible, try to reduce consumption of caffeine, sugary drinks, hot drinks, and alcohol.

## 5. Stay informed

- Learn to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and seek immediate medical attention if you, or someone you know, has any symptoms. [\[link to heat tip sheet\]](#)
- Keep an eye on those at greater risk for developing heat-related illnesses. Regularly check on family and friends who live alone.
- Ensure emergency alerts are enabled. You can check via your phone's settings.
- Download the FEMA app for immediate emergency alerts and the NOAA Weather Radio app for continuous national weather information.
- Learn more at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)