



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Helpful Tips To Keep Cool In Summer Heat

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS July 21, 2015



Don't let the heat ruin your summer, and follow these tips provided by the [NYS Department of Health](#) to protect yourself from health risks caused by the heat, and ways you can keep cool this summer:

### What should I do before a heat wave?

- Know the symptoms of heat-related illnesses.
- Make sure that you can open your windows and/or that your air conditioner is working properly.

- Find out where to cool down - ask local officials about cooling centers in your area. If there are none, identify air-conditioned buildings where you can go (such as libraries, malls, supermarkets, or friends' homes).
- Choose someone that you can call for help or who can check on you.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist to learn more about medications that might make you sensitive to the sun or heat.

### **What can I do during a heat wave?**

- Use air conditioning to cool down or go to an air-conditioned building.
- If you don't have air conditioning in your home, open windows and shades on the shady side and close them on the sunny side to try to cool it down.
- Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcohol, caffeine and sugary drinks.
- Beat the heat with cool showers and baths.
- Take regular breaks from physical activity.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest part of the day (between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.).
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing to help keep cool.
- Stay out of the sun as much as possible.
- Wear sunscreen and a ventilated hat (e.g., straw or mesh) when in the sun, even if it is cloudy.
- Never leave children, pets or those with special needs in a parked car, even briefly. Temperatures in the car can become dangerous within a few minutes.
- Check on your neighbors, family and friends, especially those who are elderly or have special needs.

### **Who is most at risk from the heat?**

- Older adults
- Young children

- People who are overweight/obese
- People who do not perspire normally
- People with some chronic medical conditions such as history of dehydration, heart problems and respiratory or lung problems
- People who work outdoors or in hot settings
- People who take certain medications that cause sensitivity to the sun or interfere with the body's ability to sweat and stay cool. Some medicines that affect the body's cooling system include antihistamines, antidepressants, over-the-counter sleeping pills, anti-diarrhea pills, beta blockers, anti-Parkinson's drugs and psychiatric drugs. Do not stop taking medication unless instructed to do so by your doctor.

### **Conserve water and power during heat waves**

- Set your thermostat no lower than 78° F.
- Only use air conditioning in rooms that you are occupying.
- Turn off lights and non-essential appliances when they are not in use.
- Only run dishwashers and washing machines when they are full and during hours of low energy demand (between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m.).
- Only water your lawn in the early morning or evening hours.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator (so that you do not have to let the tap run while waiting for it to cool).
- Defrost food in the refrigerator overnight (instead of running water to thaw it).
- Take short showers.
- Only fill the tub halfway when bathing.
- Turn off the tap while you are brushing your teeth.

For additional information, please visit the [NYS Department of Health website](#).