

Sun Advice from the HSE Department of Public Health and Cork Kerry Community Healthcare:

HSE representatives in Cork and Kerry have appealed to the public to stay safe in this week's rising temperatures.

Dr Augustine Pereira, Director of Public Health at HSE South reminded the public that higher temperatures increase the risk of dehydration, fainting and heat exhausting, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and small children. It is important to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids and avoiding unnecessary exertion.

Dr Augustine Pereira, said:

“Taking precautions like avoiding direct sunlight between 11pm and 3pm, seeking shade if out enjoying the weather during those times and covering up using a hat or loose long sleeves and wearing sunglasses can protect your skin and eyes. Slapping on sunscreen generously is very important and more so for young children you are responsible for; it won't provide 100% protection for your skin but it's important to use a high factor sun protection.”

Children and babies have very sensitive skin which can burn easily. The National Cancer Control Programme warns that getting a painful sunburn in childhood can double the risk of developing skin cancer in later life, particularly melanoma - the most serious form of skin cancer.

Met Eireann has predicted UV levels to be high this week, and it's important to note that UV levels don't fluctuate whether it's cloudy or not.

Dr Pereira added:

“The most important thing is that people enjoy the good weather safely and don't regret enjoying the good weather a few years down the line.”

Every year the HSE identifies close to 10,000 skin cancers, both melanoma and non-melanoma. Fortunately, you can easily study your skin and take time to monitor your

skin for moles. If you notice any changes in size or colour of your moles, speak to your GP.

Priscilla Lynch, Head of Health and Wellbeing with Cork Kerry Community Healthcare urged the public to check in on those at a higher risk such as the elderly, young children and babies more often and ensure they are comfortable.

She also reminded the public to remember to wear hats, stay hydrated and use sunscreen.

Tips to stay safe in the sun:

- **SEEK** some shade, especially between 11am and 3pm.
- **SLIP** on a loose long sleeved t-shirt.
- **SLAP** on a wide brimmed hat that covers the back of the neck as well.
- **SLOP** on sunscreen generously and regularly (SPF 15 or higher and at least SPF 30 for children). Ideally, apply sunscreen 20 minutes before going outside and re-apply every 2 hours.
- **WRAP** on sun glasses.

If you do have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat. Try to keep physical exertion to the cooler part of the day.

Never leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle, especially infants. Drink plenty cold drinks and keep medicines below 25 °C or in the refrigerator.

For more information on child safety in the sun, see

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/child/childsafety/csap-sun.html>

ENDS

HSE - Hot Weather Advice

Met Éireann has indicated that temperatures will hit 27 degrees Celsius and forecasted temperatures to exceed this during the week. This has resulted in an alert being circulated and there is a high chance that an average temperature of 30C by day and 15C overnight will occur over the next day or so. These temperatures can have a significant effect on people's health, if they last for at least 2 days and the night in between. To minimise health risk, the following information is being issued.

While the heat can affect anyone, the following are most at risk of serious harm

- Older people, especially those over 75
- Babies and young children
- People with serious mental health problems
- People on certain medications
- People with a serious chronic condition, particularly breathing or heart problems
- People who already have a high temperature from an infection
- People who misuse alcohol or take illicit drugs.
- People with mobility problems
- People who are physically active, like manual workers and athletes.

Tips for keeping cool

- Remember to think of those who may be more at risk from the effects of heat
- It is best to avoid getting too hot in the first place
- Stay tuned to the weather forecast
- If you're planning to travel, check the forecast at your destination
- Learn how to keep [cool and safe at home HSE guidance](#)

Stay out of the heat

- Keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
- If you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen with both UVA and UVB protection
- Avoid extreme physical exertion. If you can't avoid strenuous outdoor activity, like sport, DIY or gardening, keep it for cooler parts of the day, like early morning or evening
- Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes and a hat to shade face, neck and ears
- Wear wrap around sun glasses with UV protection
- Wear sun protection factor: factor 30 or over with a 4 or 5 Star UVA rating on any areas that cannot be covered by clothing and a hat
- Young children, especially babies, and the elderly are more susceptible to sun damage so be extra careful.

Cool yourself down

- Drink plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
- Eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high water content
- Take a cool shower, bath or body wash
- Sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck.

Keep your environment cool

- Keep your living space cool. This is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or those who can't look after themselves
- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and open windows at night when the temperature has dropped
- Close curtains that receive morning or afternoon sun

- Turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat
- Keep plants and bowls of water in the house as evaporation helps cool the air
- If possible, move into a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- Electric fans can help but only if temperature is below 35C.

Look out for others

- Keep an eye on isolated, elderly, ill or very young people and make sure they are able to keep cool
- Ensure that babies, children or elderly people are not left alone in stationary cars
- Check on elderly or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during a heat wave
- Be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or further help is needed.

Advice on medicines

- Many prescription medicines can reduce your tolerance of heat. You should keep taking your medicines, but take extra care to keep cool.
- Danger symptoms to watch out for in hot weather include: feeling faint and dizzy, short of breath, vomiting or increasing confusion. Take immediate action if - danger symptoms of heatstroke are present: Cool down as quickly as possible. However do not take aspirin or paracetamol – this can make you worse. Do however carry on taking all other prescribed medicines. Seek further advice from a doctor, or ring 999 if the person has collapsed.
- Keep medicines below 25°C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging).
- Seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications.

If you or others feel unwell

- Try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- Drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate
- Rest immediately in a cool place if you have painful muscular cramps (particularly in the legs, arms or abdomen, in many cases after sustained exercise during very hot weather)
- Drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes
- Seek medical attention as needed if heat cramps last more than one hour
- Consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist.

Seek advice if you have any concerns

- Contact your doctor or a pharmacist if you are worried about your health during a heat wave, especially if you are taking medication, if you feel unwell or have any unusual symptoms
- Watch for cramp in your arms, legs or stomach, feelings of mild confusion, weakness or problems sleeping
- If you have these symptoms, rest for several hours, keep cool and drink water or fruit juice. Seek medical advice if they get worse or don't go away.

If you suspect someone has heatstroke

- Remember, heatstroke can kill. It can develop very suddenly, and rapidly lead to unconsciousness. If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call 999 immediately.
- While waiting for the ambulance, move the person somewhere cooler if possible, increase ventilation by opening windows or using a fan and cool the affected person as quickly as possible by loosening their clothes, sprinkling them with cold water or wrapping them in a damp sheet. If they are conscious, give them water or fruit juice to drink.

- DO NOT give them aspirin or paracetamol.

HSE advises everyone to enjoy the sun but protect themselves against skin cancer

With Ireland experiencing it's hottest summer in decades, the HSE National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) is this week advising people to enjoy the good weather but to protect themselves against skin cancer.

HSE contact

Dedicated HSE spokesperson will be identified to deal with media queries.

For service delivery queries, please contact your local area.