



Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health

# EXTREME HEAT ALERT

The **HEAT** EDUCATION and ALERT TOOLS (**HEAT**) RESPONSE

A heat wave is expected in Massachusetts over the next seven days. Help prepare your patients and communities who are sensitive to heat-related illness.

The Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health is **monitoring temperature forecasts to identify periods of heat waves** that may put individuals in your community at increased risk for heat-related illness. We have provided a collection of links and resources focused on high-risk populations, health hazards associated with extreme heat, response strategies, and tools to support effective planning.

## Remember “First is the Worst”

This week’s forecasted heat wave marks the first of the season— when the risk is highest. Data show that heat-related illnesses and hospital visits spike during the first stretch of 85°F days, before people have acclimated to the heat. Please take extra care with vulnerable populations, check on those at risk, and use the tools and resources available to help your patients and community stay safe.



Extreme heat can be dangerous and even life-threatening if precautions are not taken. During prolonged periods of very hot weather, which may include high humidity, the body must work harder to stay cool, increasing the risk of heat-related illness. While anyone can be affected, **older adults, young children, pregnant individuals, workers exposed to excessive heat, and people with chronic medical conditions** are especially vulnerable. Taking preventive steps—like staying hydrated, avoiding strenuous activity, and seeking cooler environments—can help protect your patients and community members during periods of extreme heat.

## H.E.A.T. Resources and Alerts

**Extreme Heat Page:** A central hub for resources, tools, and guidance to stay safe during periods of extreme heat.

- **Unhealthy Heat Forecast Page:** Track upcoming heat conditions in your community with a 7-day forecast and color-coded risk levels.
- **Updated Extreme Heat Resource Guide:** A comprehensive guide for local health, clinicians, and agencies to plan for and respond to extreme heat. ([PDF](#)) ([DOCX](#))
- **Targeted MDPH HHAN H.E.A.T. Alerts:** Timely alerts delivered through HHAN to help healthcare professionals, local health departments, and other stakeholders respond during forecasted extreme heat events.
- **Expanded Fact Sheets:** Clear, targeted guidance for specific settings and populations vulnerable to extreme heat. [Extreme heat resources | Mass.gov](#)
- **Heat and Medications:** Many medications, including over the counter medications, can impair heat tolerance and the body's ability to regulate its temperature, which can predispose people to heat illness during hot days. Medications can decrease the ability to sweat, and therefore to cool, through limiting the dilation of blood vessels in the skin that can release heat or through affecting the body's ability to control its temperature. Medications, including certain antibiotics, can increase sensitivity of the skin to the sun, and direct heat can degrade or damage certain medications, such as insulin or inhalers. Here is the CDC link for more details:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/hcp/clinical-guidance/heat-and-medications-guidance-for-clinicians.html>

Sincerely,

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health

### **More Information:**

For more information on the **Heat Education and Alert Tools (HEAT) Response Initiative**, visit:

[Extreme Heat | Mass.gov](#)

For more information on climate and health in Massachusetts, please visit:

[Climate and Health | Mass.gov](#)