



NARRAGANSETT INDIAN HEALTH CENTER

Improving health in our community

July 18, 2022

Dear Tribal Member:

This week Rhode Island is looking at a heat wave predicted to be several or more days long and the NIHC would like to share the following information from the Red Cross website:

What Should You Do Before a Heat Wave?

Learn How to Stay Hydrated

- Drinking enough water is one of the most important things you can do to prevent heat-related illness. An average person needs to drink about three-quarters of a gallon of fluid daily.
- Stay away from sugary, caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.
- In general, eating meals and snacks throughout the day with adequate water intake is enough to maintain electrolytes and replace salt lost when you sweat.
- Certain medical conditions and medications may mean you need to drink more water. Talk to your healthcare provider.

Gather Water & Emergency Supplies

[Gather food, water, and medicine](#) in advance because stores and pharmacies might be closed. Organize your supplies into a Go-Kit and a Stay-at-Home Kit.

- Go-Kit: 3 days of supplies that you can easily carry with you.
- Stay-at-Home Kit: 2 weeks of supplies if you need to stay at home.
- Have a 1-month supply of medication in a child-proof container.
- Keep personal, financial, and medical records safe.

Take Actions to Keep Your Home Cool

- Cover windows with drapes or shades.
- Weather-strip doors and windows.
- Use window reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Add insulation to keep the heat out.
- Use a powered attic ventilator or attic fan to regulate the heat level of your attic by clearing hot air.
- Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.

Plan to Go to a Cool Place

Spending a few hours each day in air conditioning can help prevent or reduce heat-related illness. If you do not have air conditioning in your home, identify a place where you can spend the warmest part of the day during an extreme heat event.

- Contact a nearby neighbor, friend or relative who has air conditioning.
- Check to see if shopping malls or public libraries are open.
- Find out if your community plans to open public cooling centers.

Source: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/heat-wave-safety.html>

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What Should You Do During a Heat Wave?

Stay Connected

- Never leave infants, children, older adults, individuals with disabilities or pets in a vehicle unattended. Cars can quickly heat up to dangerous temperatures, even with a window cracked open.
- Check-in on older adults and individuals with chronic health conditions at least twice daily. When visiting, ask yourself these questions:
 - Are they drinking enough water?
 - Do they have access to air conditioning?
 - Do they know how to keep cool?
 - Do they show any signs of heat stress?
- Be on the lookout for signs of heat-related illness. Act right away if you notice someone with symptoms.
- **If someone is showing signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke seek emergency medical care immediately.**

Stay Hydrated

- Drink plenty of fluids: Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Avoid sugary, caffeinated or alcoholic drinks. Avoid icy beverages because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Replace salt and minerals: Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from your body that need to be replaced. A sports drink or a snack can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.
- Keep pets hydrated: Provide plenty of fresh water for your pets and leave the water in a shady area.
- Warning: If your doctor limits the amount of water you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink while the weather is hot. If you are on a low-salt diet, have diabetes, high blood pressure, or other chronic conditions, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage.

Stay Cool

- Stay cool indoors: Stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible.
- Wear appropriate clothing: Choose lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
- Don't use an electric fan when the indoor air temperature is over 95°F. Using a fan can be more harmful than helpful when indoor air temperatures are hotter than your body temperature. Fan use may cause your body to gain heat instead of losing it. Focus on staying hydrated, taking a cool shower or bath to cool your body, shutting out the sun and heat with curtains, and moving to an airconditioned place to cool off.
- Use your stove and oven less.
- Schedule outdoor work and other activities carefully: Try to limit your outdoor activity to when it's coolest, such as morning and evening hours. Rest often in shady areas so that your body has a chance to recover.
- Cut down on exercise during the heat.
- When outdoors, protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen that says "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection."

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