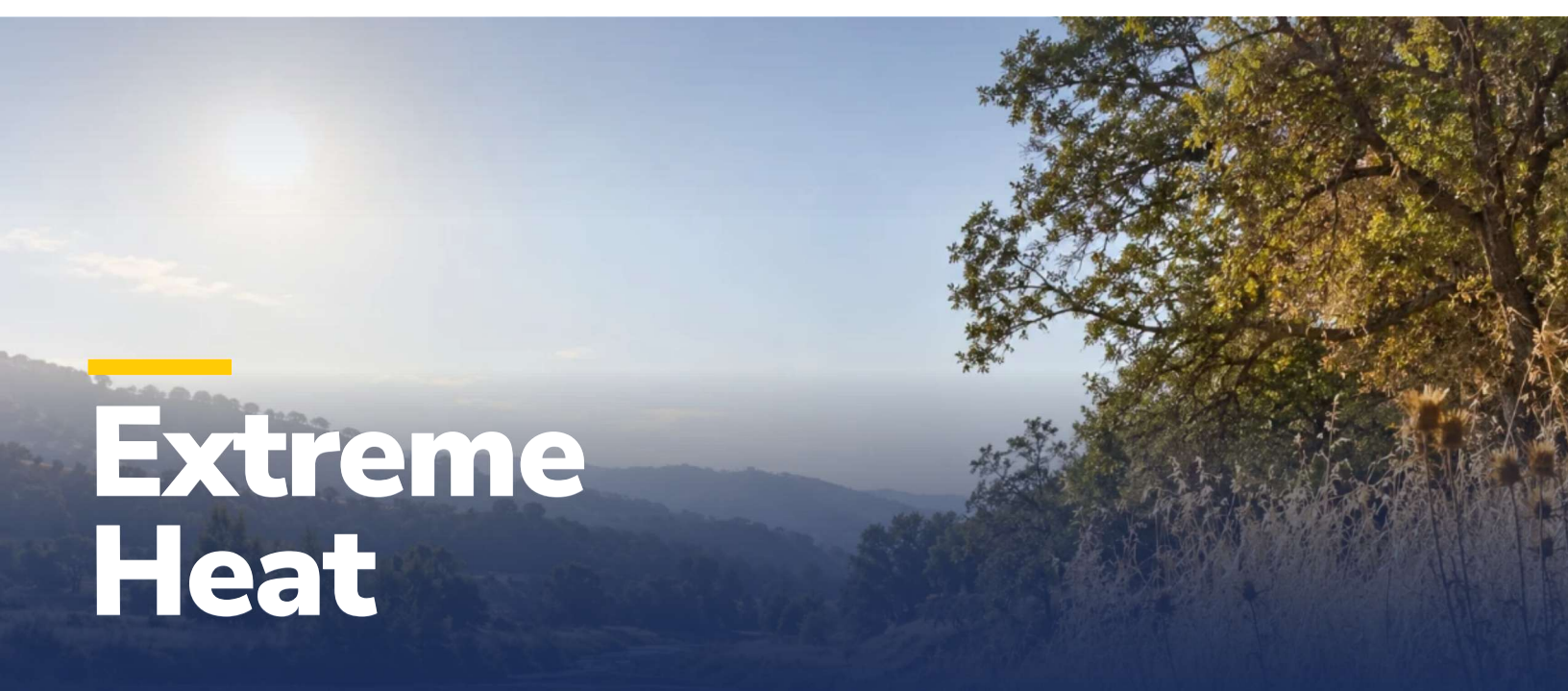


A background image showing a hazy, sunlit landscape with rolling hills and a large tree on the right side. The sun is visible in the upper left, creating a lens flare effect.

Extreme Heat

Health-focused guidance for surviving prolonged high temperatures, heat waves, and power outages during heat events.

Extreme heat is the leading cause of weather-related deaths in the U.S. — and unlike a storm, it arrives without visible damage. Heat affects homes, power, crops, and livestock, but the greatest risk is to people. Use this checklist to prepare before, protect during, and recover after a heat event.

01

BEFORE

Watch the forecast, cool your home, know who's at risk.

02

DURING

Hydrate, find a cooling center, recognize heat illness.

03

AFTER

Harden your home, get help with cooling costs, recover.

#1

Extreme heat kills more Americans each year than any other weather hazard.

103°F

A body temperature this high is heat stroke. Call 911 immediately.

01 PHASE ONE Before the heat arrives

- Check the **week's forecast**. If extreme heat is projected, plan ahead to stay hydrated, stay in cool areas, and wear lightweight clothing.
- Install **window air conditioners** before the first heat wave — supply and installers run short once temperatures climb.
- Don't rely on **electric fans alone** — they move air but do not lower the temperature.
- Plan for **backup power** if you depend on refrigerated medications, oxygen, or other powered medical equipment.
- Follow local news and the **National Weather Service** for heat alerts, plus the CDC and NOAA **HeatRisk Dashboard and Forecast Tool**.
- Limit use of the **oven, stove top, and other heat-producing appliances**, which raise indoor temperatures.
- Locate **public cooling centers** near you — libraries, public pools, shopping malls — and confirm hours before you need them.
- Know which neighbors, relatives, or clients you will **check on daily** during a heat event.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK

Young children and infants	Adults 65 and older	People who are overweight
People with medical conditions or illness	People who work outdoors	People in older housing without A/C

HEAT INDEX — WHAT IT MEANS

- 80–90°F** Caution — fatigue with prolonged activity
- 90–103°F** Extreme caution — cramps and exhaustion possible
- 103–124°F** Danger — heat exhaustion likely, heat stroke possible
- 125°F+** Extreme danger — heat stroke highly likely

MEDICATION NOTE

Some medications reduce your ability to sweat or stay hydrated. Ask your pharmacist how heat affects yours.

02 PHASE TWO During extreme heat

Never leave anyone in a car

A parked car heats far faster than the air outside, even with the windows cracked. Never leave children, older adults, or pets inside — not for a minute.

- Drink plenty of **water throughout the day**, before you feel thirsty.
- Check daily on people at high risk: **adults 65+, infants, children, pets, and anyone without A/C**.
- Keep **refrigerated medications cold** — if power fails, use a cooler with ice packs and call your pharmacist about replacements.
- Spend time in a **cooling center** if your home can't stay cool — even a few hours helps your body recover.
- Wear **lightweight, loose clothing** and limit outdoor activity to the coolest parts of the day.
- Learn the signs of heat illness below and **act at the first symptom** — heat exhaustion can become heat stroke quickly.

EMERGENCY — CALL 911

Heat stroke

Body temperature of 103°F or higher

Hot, dry skin

Nausea, dizziness, and headaches

Seek medical attention immediately. Do not give the person any liquids.

ACT QUICKLY

Heat exhaustion

Heavy sweating

Muscle cramps

Nausea, dizziness, and headaches

Move to a cooler place, remove excess clothing, cool the body, and take small sips of liquid. If symptoms worsen, seek medical attention.

MORNING

Check the day's heat alert.
Run errands and outdoor work now, while it's coolest.

AFTERNOON

Stay indoors or at a cooling center during peak hours.
Keep drinking water.

EVENING

Call or visit the people on your check-in list. Heat risk stays high after dark.

THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM

Much U.S. housing and infrastructure was never built for sustained extreme heat — especially in northern and northwestern regions that historically had cool summers. As heat events grow more frequent, homes need upgrades to keep people safe.

WAYS TO HEAT-PROOF YOUR HOME

Window film or tinting

Backup power supply

Upgraded insulation

Lighter exterior paint color

Shade trees or awnings

A/C service before summer

Can't afford cooling costs?

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps with cooling bills, weatherization, and energy-related home repairs.

[Ask your state LIHEAP office](#)

Need someone to talk to?

The Disaster Distress Helpline is free, confidential, and available around the clock after any disaster.

[Call or text 1-800-985-5990](#)

HEAT TOOLS & CONTACTS

CDC HeatRisk Dashboard (by ZIP)

cdc.gov/heatrisk

NWS HeatRisk forecast

weather.gov/heatrisk

Disaster Distress Helpline

[1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990)

Local help & cooling centers

[2-1-1](#)

Rx on the Run
medication list

healthcareready.org/rxontherun

Healthcare Ready Alert
Hub

healthcareready.org/alert-hub