A photograph of four healthcare workers (two men and two women) wearing blue scrubs, smiling and standing in a hospital hallway. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue banner containing text.

CAREGIVER
SAFETY
GUIDE

PROTECTING
THOSE WHO
PROVIDE CARE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of contents-----	2
<u>Going out into the community checklist -----</u>	3
<u>If you must use your car during a storm... -----</u>	5
<u>Preparing for Winter Travel -----</u>	6
<u>Watch Out for Snowplows-----</u>	8
<u>Crash Reports -----</u>	9
<u>Fire Safety -----</u>	10
<u>To address other fire causes -----</u>	11
<u>When and How to Use a Fire Extinguisher: -----</u>	12
<u>Bed Bug Information for Health Care Workers and -----</u>	13
<u>Recognizing and Finding Bed Bugs -----</u>	16
<u>Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness -----</u>	17
<u>Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness-----</u>	22
<u>Frequently Asked Questions -----</u>	25
<u>Checklists For Home Healthcare Workers' Safety-----</u>	26
<u>Helpful Contact Information -----</u>	30



Going out into the community checklist

Workplace violence can also result from the community. The checklist below provides steps one can take to enhance his or her personal safety.

www.aishlingcareacademy.com

- ✓ Ensure your phone is fully charged and you have a spare phone charger with you or in your car.
- ✓ Add ICE contacts in your phone (in case of emergency the police would call these contacts).
- ✓ Carry identification such as Company ID, Driver's License or State ID at all times.
- ✓ Avoid carrying a purse. Carry a cross body purse containing IDs, spare phone charger, hand sanitizer and mace for your protection at all times
- ✓ Wear comfortable shoes with non-skid soles that allow you to move with ease and safety.
- ✓ Know exactly where you are going before leaving your home.
- ✓ Be sure your car is in good working order; Checking your car's tires for sufficient air and fuel before leaving
- ✓ Plan the safest route to and from the client's home, even if it isn't the most direct and keep all doors locked when driving.
- ✓ We recommend that you keep the following items in your car at all times:
 - two bottles of water
 - a blanket
 - non-perishable snacks
 - a first aid kit

Going out into the community checklist

CONTINUED...

- ✓ If working in unfamiliar neighborhoods, check surroundings as you exit your vehicle. Avoid people lingering on corners or doorways and walk briskly with purpose to your destination.
- ✓ Maintain constant vigilance and be able to discern any alterations in the condition of the client or other family members while in their residence.
- ✓ If uncomfortable working with pets in the home, request to see their pet's record for current vaccinations for your safety. If unwilling or allergic to pets in the home, you must contact your agency. We suggest keeping your tetanus vaccination current.
- ✓ You should always call your supervisor for the following situations:
 - A house where weapons are present
 - A client/family member appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs
 - Threatening animals
- ✓ Know your employer's emergency procedures.

IF YOU MUST USE YOUR CAR DURING A STORM...



Driving during winter weather conditions is sometimes hazardous at best. The information below and on the other pages of this topic are designed to be useful as you prepare to confront the winter season.

<https://isp.illinois.gov/TrafficSafety/WinterSafety>

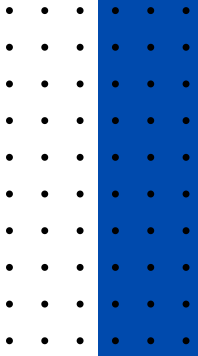
- Plan your travel, selecting both primary and alternate routes.
- Let someone know your travel routes and itinerary so that, if you don't arrive on time, officials will know where to search for you.
- Check latest weather information on your radio.
- Try not to travel alone - two or three people are preferable.
- Travel in convoy (with another vehicle) if possible.
- Drive carefully and defensively. Watch for ice patches on bridges and overpasses.
- If a storm begins to be too much for you to handle, seek refuge immediately.
- If your car should become disabled, stay with the vehicle, running your engine and heater for short intervals. Be sure to "crack" a window in the vehicle to avoid carbon monoxide build-up.

Reliable transportation is especially important in the winter. If you have a car, make sure it is ready for whatever winter may bring. Not only should your car be kept in top operating condition all year round - for safety and fuel economy, it is especially important to get it winterized to avoid any unpleasant or dangerous situation while traveling in frigid weather. The following should be checked:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| • ignition system | • tire tread |
| • fuel system | • defroster |
| • brakes | • proper grade oil |
| • exhaust system | • cooling system |
| • wiper blades | • battery |
| • snow tires | • lights |
| | • antifreeze |



Always fill the gasoline tank before entering open country, even for a short distance, and stop to fill-up long before the tank begins to run low. Keeping your tank as full as possible will minimize condensation, providing the maximum advantage in case of trouble. A Citizens Band (CB) radio and/or cellular phone can be very useful to you or another stranded motorist in case of an emergency.

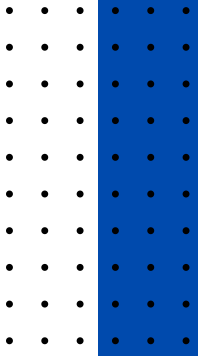


<https://isp.illinois.gov/StaticFiles/docs/TrafficResources/5-221.pdf>

PREPARING FOR WINTER TRAVEL

TAKE YOUR TIME ...

- Check Illinois road conditions at www.gettingaroundillinois.com before you leave or call the Winter Road Conditions Hotline at 1-800-452-4368 for valuable travel information, which is continuously updated.
- Choose main routes and be rested and alert.
- Make someone aware of your routes and if your plans change, let someone know. Check in when you've reached your destination.
- Remember, cell phone coverage is not available in many remote areas.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Clear any snow, ice or frost from windows, lights, hood, heater and air inlet vents (don't forget mirrors and wipers).
- Do not drive with the heater in recirculation mode as it can increase humidity.
- Drive with your lights on and reduce your speed.



<https://isp.illinois.gov/StaticFiles/docs/TrafficResources/5-221.pdf>

PREPARING FOR WINTER TRAVEL CONTINUED...

USE THESE TIPS TO PREVENT SLIPS

Adjust your driving for the conditions. If there is ice or snow on the road you must take extra precautions.

- Don't use cruise control in wet, icy or snowy weather.
- Position your hands on the steering wheel at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock.
- If you lose traction, gradually slow down – don't slam on the brakes!
- Steering, braking and accelerating smoothly are key to maximum vehicle control on slippery surfaces. Steer just enough to follow the path you intend (most people steer too much or too fast).
- Be ready to handle potentially dangerous situations by thinking ahead about your options, such as controlling your speed and changing lanes.
- Use extra caution when driving on bridges or concrete highways – ice forms first on these surfaces.
- Avoid driving through snowdrifts; they may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Slow down in advance of shaded areas, especially curves, where ice and snow are the last to melt



WATCH OUT FOR SNOWPLOWS

Remember...snowplows are covered under Scott's Law, the "Move Over Law," which mandates that when approaching any emergency vehicle stopped along the roadway, you must:

- Proceed with due caution
- Change lanes if possible
- Reduce your speed

DURING A WINTER STORM

if stranded in a car...

Remain in your vehicle where rescuers are most likely to find you! Turn your hazard lights on, hang a piece of cloth or distress flag from the radio antenna or window, or display a trouble sign. When the engine is running, open a window slightly. This will protect you from carbon monoxide. You may need to clear snow away from the car's exhaust pipe.

CRASH REPORTS

Each driver involved in an Illinois traffic crash must file a crash report if the crash caused a death, bodily injury, or more than \$1,500 of property damage when all drivers are insured. If any driver does not have insurance, the threshold is \$500. If a police officer does not appear on the scene, you need to file a report with the Illinois State Police as soon as possible, within 10 days.

Individuals can complete their own crash report online when the crash meets specific criteria. The crash must be a single vehicle, property-damage-only crash where there were no injuries to anyone involved, and it occurred on either an Interstate or a U.S. or Illinois Route.

If you were involved in a traffic crash on an Illinois Toll Way, please contact ISP Troop 15 at (630) 241-6800. If you were involved in a traffic crash occurring on a freeway in the Chicago metro area (Cook County), you can file a Desk Report in person. Motorists should exchange information and be prepared to provide driver's license information, vehicle registration, proof of liability insurance, and call back phone numbers for any driver not present for a follow up investigation by Trooper. Hit and run crashes can also be taken as a Desk Report. If you are involved in a hit and run crash, do not try to follow the offending vehicle. Instead, please obtain as much detailed information as possible, and report the incident as soon as possible.

Troopers can take a Desk Report at the following local police departments Monday through Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and 7:00 PM to 3:00 AM; anytime on Saturdays and Sundays.

Troop 3 Metro

- Chicago Police Department 1st District located at 1718 S. State Street, Chicago IL
- Chicago Police Department 2nd District located at 5101 South Wentworth Avenue, Chicago, IL
- Chicago Police Department 5th District located at 727 E. 111th Street, Chicago IL
- Chicago Police Department 11th District located at 3151 W. Harrison, Chicago IL
- Chicago Police Department 16th District located at 5151 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago IL
- Lansing Police Department, located at 2710 S. 170th Street, Lansing, IL
- Northfield Police Department located at 350 Walnut, Northfield, IL
- Oak Forest Police Department located at 15440 Central Ave, Oak Forrest, IL
- Summit Police Department located at 5810 S. Archer Road, Summit, IL
- Westchester Police Department located at 10300 Roosevelt Road, Westchester, IL

Troop 3 Collar-North

- Rolling Meadows Police Department located at 3600 Kirchoff Rd, Rolling Meadow
- Addison Police Department located at 3 Friendship Plaza, Addison, IL
- Darion Police Department located at 1710 Plainfield Rd, Darien, IL

Troop 3 Collar-South

- New Lenox Police Department located at 200 Veterans Pkwy, New Lenox, IL – Must meet outside.
- IDOT Park and Ride at I-55 and Route 30 Joliet, IL

Upon arrival at an above listed police station, motorists should call (847) 294-4400 to advise that they are in need of a Trooper at the respective location for a desk report. Motorists can also file crash reports anytime at ISP Troop 3 Metro located at 9511 West Harrison Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016.

<https://isp.illinois.gov/CrashReports>





FIRE SAFETY

<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/emergency-preparedness/fire-safety>

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths

Minimize Your Risks:

- Cooking safety is paramount; stay alert and avoid cooking if sleepy or under the influence.
 - Always stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food, and use a timer when simmering or roasting.
 - Keep flammable materials away from stovetops to prevent fires.
 - When heating, maintain a safe distance of at least 3 feet between flammables and space heaters, stoves, or fireplaces.
 - Never leave portable heaters or fireplaces unattended, and turn them off before leaving the room.
 - Place space heaters on nonflammable surfaces, away from rugs or carpets.
 - Ensure the safety of children and pets around space heaters.
 - Consider space heaters with automatic shutoff features in case of tipping.
-

TO ADDRESS OTHER FIRE CAUSES:

- Institute a "no smoking" policy indoors.
- Regularly inspect cords and replace damaged ones.
- Opt for flameless candles instead of traditional ones.
- Store matches and lighters out of children's reach in a locked cabinet.

WORKING SMOKE ALARMS ARE A MUST:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas.
- Place smoke alarms at least 10 feet away from the kitchen to avoid false alarms.
- Special alarms are available for individuals who are hard of hearing or deaf.
- Test smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years old or older.

MAKE AN ESCAPE PLAN:

- Develop a home escape plan that includes two exit routes from each room.
- Ensure doors and windows open easily.
- Identify secondary escape routes, such as windows onto an adjacent roof or collapsible ladders.
- In multi-story buildings, use stairs for evacuation, not elevators.
- Designate an outside meeting place away from the house.

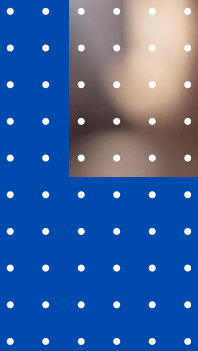
PRACTICE YOUR HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN:

- Regularly practice fire drills with all household members, both day and night.
- Practice escaping with eyes closed, crawling low, and covering your mouth.
- Emphasize the importance of closing doors behind you.
- Teach "stop, drop, and roll" in case clothes catch fire.
- Ensure everyone knows how to check door handles for heat before opening them.



WHEN AND HOW TO USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER:

- Safety first: If uncertain about using a fire extinguisher, evacuate and call 911.
- Evaluate the situation by ensuring everyone has left, the fire department is on the way, the fire is small, and there's minimal smoke.
- Remember PASS: Pull the pin, Aim low at the base of the fire, Squeeze the handle slowly, and Sweep the nozzle side to side



BED BUG INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

by Marcia
Anderson and Dr.
Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA



Worried about BED BUGS?

Many people will enter places they suspect may have bed bugs. Home health workers, maintenance and cleaning personnel, persons making deliveries and installations, travelers, first responders and emergency personnel must enter structures that are potentially bed bug infested. Following these tips will help to keep you and your family safe from bed bug nightmares.

Prevent And Protect Yourself From Bed Bugs!

Traveling Tips

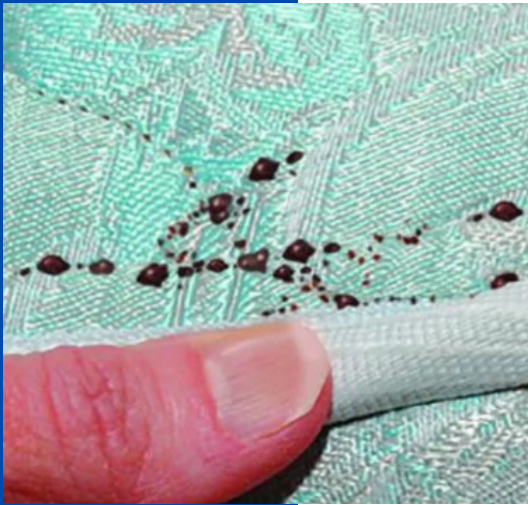
- Inspect mattress & headboard with flashlight.
- When traveling keep bags, luggage, and backpacks off the bed. Inspect and then use a luggage rack.
- Never place clothes, or jackets, on bed or couch. Do not store clothes in dresser.
- If you find a bed bug, collect a specimen, give to the hotel manager and ask for a different room.
- If you are concerned about exposure, after traveling, seal all items in plastic bags for washing, hot drying or other treatment.
- Unpack clothes directly into washer / drier. Dry on high heat.
- Inspect luggage closely with flashlight and magnifying glass for bed bugs upon returning home.

Day-to-Day Prevention

- Bed bugs are excellent hitchhikers, so be extra careful when traveling or having visitors in your home. Be aware of where you sit and place your belongings.
- Provide a special place for visitors to place their belongings. Then clean it shortly after they leave.
- Wash bedding regularly.
- Do Not bring second-hand furniture into your home unless you have thoroughly inspected and cleaned the items first.

BED BUG INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

by Marcia
Anderson and Dr.
Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA



Prevent And Protect Yourself From Bed Bugs!

On-the-job Exposure to Bed Bugs

- Minimize the amount of items you bring into a place suspected of having bed bugs.
- If you bring items in, seal them in a garbage bag or plastic bin when not in use.
- If you use disposable bags, discard them before you return to the vehicle.

- Keep most of your belongings sealed in containers inside your vehicle.
- If you bring items in, do not place them on beds, couches or chairs and avoid physical contact with this furniture, if possible.
- Spray DEET onto your shoes and pants before entering an infested area.
- Keep a dedicated set of clothing and shoes – just for that work site. Change in the bathroom. Change back just before you leave. Place work clothes and shoes in a plastic bag to await treatment when you get home.

Physical Control Methods

- Vacuuming reduces bed bug populations. Clean and vacuum bed bug prone areas daily. Immediately seal and dispose of vacuum bag.
- Install encasements on mattress and box spring.
- Make the bed an island: Keep bed away from the wall and do not let bedding touch the floor.
- Install bed bug interceptors under bed and furniture legs.
- Remove clutter where bed bugs can hide.
- Keep clothing off of the floor.
- Isolate infested items in sealed plastic bags or containers. Treat items in a hot dryer for 30 minutes.
- Clean and scrub furniture fabric seams and folds with detergent.
- Seal cracks where bed bugs can hide.
- If you live in an apartment or other multi-family dwelling, and you see a bed bug, contact your landlord immediately.

BED BUG INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

by Marcia
Anderson and Dr.
Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA



NOTIFICATION / EDUCATION

If even a single bed bug is found, it is imperative that all personnel in, and management of the affected building space be notified of the situation and provided with this information. Provide employees with actions they should take, such as increased vigilance of their surroundings and scrutiny of their possessions to avoid inadvertently taking one home. Personnel should employ plastic storage bins to isolate items that are routinely carried back and forth from home as a protective measure.

What Do Bed Bugs Look Like?

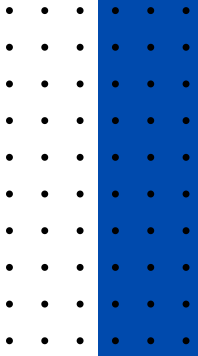
- Adults are rusty red, and apple seed sized, <math><1/4\text{''}</math>, with six legs, oval, and flattened from top to bottom.
- They do not jump or fly, but are good runners and hitch hikers.
- They tend to congregate together.
- Eggs are tiny, white, and glued to surfaces.
- Nymphs are - Bed bugs can live several months without a blood meal.

Signs of Bed Bugs

- Infestations will leave small, whitish shed skins, and black and rusty spots on bed linens which are droppings and blood stains from crushed bugs.
- You may have red, itchy welts or rashes from bites; however, bite marks alone are not a reliable indication of a bed bug infestation, as bites could be from any number of other sources.

Important, Be Sure Your Pests are Bed Bugs!!

1. **Capture and contain several examples of the pest and have them identified by a qualified expert before taking any further actions.**
2. **Skipping this step could be an expensive mistake. Many people have been treated for bed bugs without actually having them.**

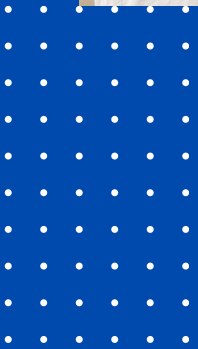
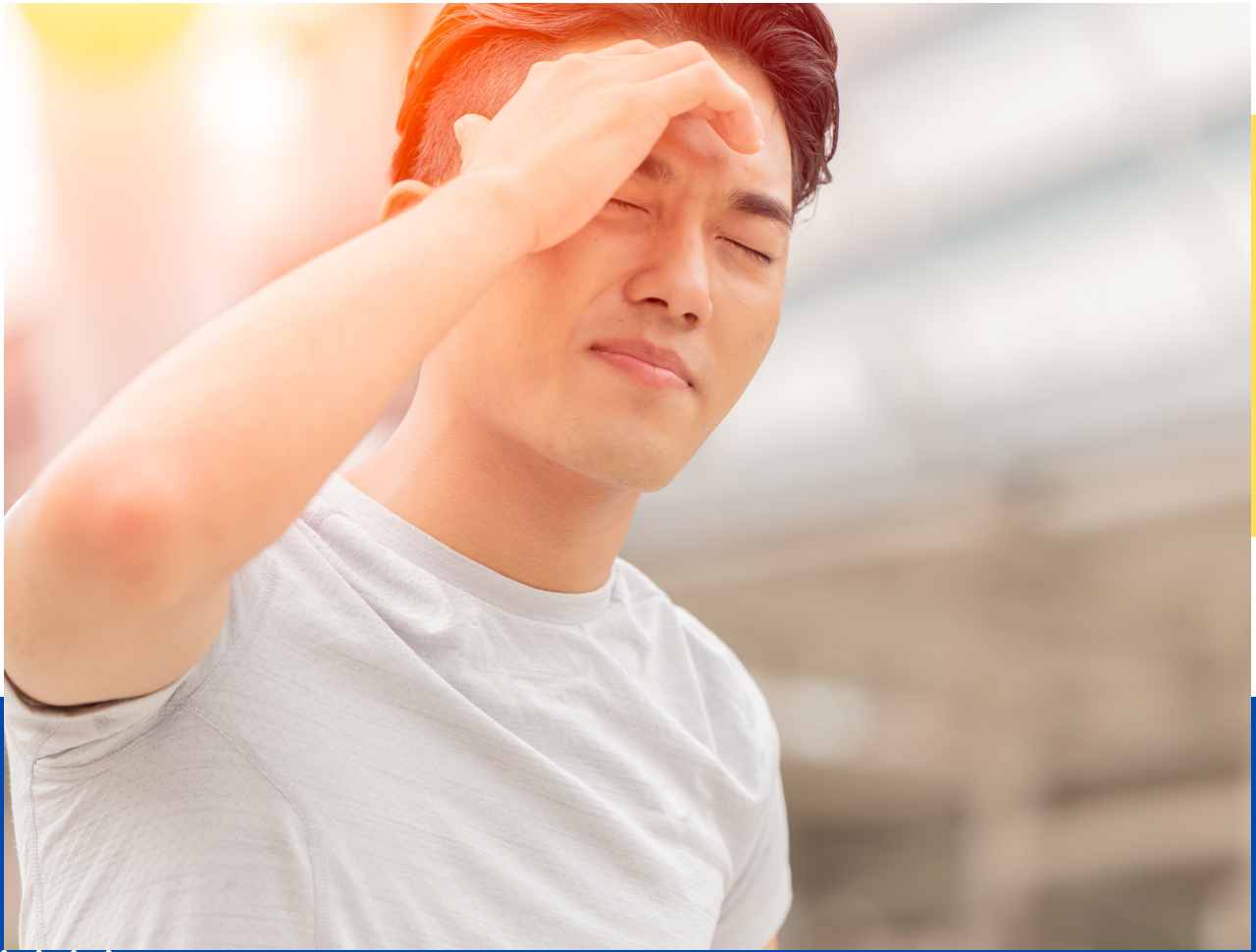


by Marcia
Anderson and Dr.
Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA

RECOGNIZING AND FINDING BED BUGS

- Check for spots on your blankets, bed sheets and pillows.
- Check mattresses: along seams and piping, under handles and labels.
- In bed frames and head boards.
- Check box springs: under the thin dust cloth on bottom hidden in nail holes, cracks, by staples, springs and nails.
- Seams and folds in curtains and furniture, including chairs and sofas.
- Under and along edges of wall-to-wall carpeting and padding.
- Anywhere there are cracks, crevices or nail holes in walls, and under wood moldings.
- Under loose wallpaper and seams.
- In and behind picture frames and mirrors.
- In clothing and clutter stored under beds in closets and elsewhere.
- Inside switch plates, electrical outlets, clocks, computers, phones, and televisions.
- On and in luggage, backpacks and bags.

TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS



TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

1. Stay Cool

- **Wear Appropriate Clothing:** Choose lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- **Stay Cool Indoors:** Stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible. If your client's home does not have air conditioning, plan to go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area.

Keep in mind: Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, they will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off. Use your stove and oven less to maintain a cooler temperature in the home.

- **Schedule Outdoor Activities Carefully:** Try to limit outdoor activity to when it's coolest, like morning and evening hours. Everyone should rest often in shady areas so that their body has a chance to recover.
- **Take it Easy:** Cut down or eliminate high exertion activities during the heat. If you or your client are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity. Get into a cool area or into the shade, and rest, especially if symptoms of lightheadedness, confusion, weakness, or fainting.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS CONTINUED . . .

[HTTPS://WWW.DHS.GOV/DISASTERS/EXTREMEHEAT/HEATTIPS.HTML](https://www.dhs.gov/disasters/extreme-heat/heat-tips.html)

- **Wear Sunscreen:** Sunburn affects the body's ability to cool down and can cause dehydration. If you must go outdoors, protect yourself and your client from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going out. Continue to reapply it according to the package directions.

Tip: Look for sunscreens that say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels- these products work best.



- **Do Not Leave Children and Older Adults in Cars:** Cars can quickly heat up to dangerous temperatures, even with a window cracked open. While anyone left in a parked car is at risk, children and older adults are especially at risk of getting a heat stroke or dying. When traveling with children, remember to do the following:
 1. Never leave infants, children, adults in your care, or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked open.
 2. To remind yourself that a child is in the car, keep a stuffed animal in the car seat. When the child is buckled in, place the stuffed animal in the front seat with you.
- **Avoid Hot and Heavy Meals:** They add heat to your body!



TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS CONTINUED . . .

[HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/DISASTERS/EXTREMEHEAT/HEATTIPS.HTML](https://www.dhs.gov/disasters/extreme-heat/heat-tips.html)

2. Stay Hydrated

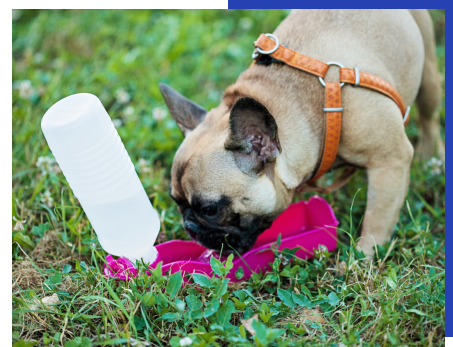
- **Drink Plenty of Fluids:** Drink more fluids, regardless of how active you are. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.

Warning: If your doctor limits the amount you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink while the weather is hot.

- **Stay away from very sugary or alcoholic drinks**—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- **Replace Salt and Minerals:** Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body that need to be replaced. A sports drink can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.

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 or taking salt tablets.

- **Keep Your Pets Hydrated:** Provide plenty of fresh water for your pets, and leave the water in a shady area.



TIPS FOR PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS CONTINUED . . .

[HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/DISASTERS/EXTREMEHEAT/HEATTIPS.HTML](https://www.dhs.gov/disasters/extreme-heat/heat-tips.html)

3. Stay Informed

- **Check for Updates:** Check your local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips and to learn about any cooling shelters in your area.
- **Know the Signs:** Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and how to treat them.
- **Use a Buddy System:** When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness. If you are 65 years of age or older, have a friend or relative call to check on you twice a day during a heat wave. If you know someone in this age group, check on them at least twice a day.
- **Monitor Those at High Risk:** Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others:
 1. Infants and young children
 2. People 65 years of age or older
 3. People who are overweight
 4. People who overexert during work or exercise
 5. People who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation.

Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.





SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

People suffer heat-related illness when the body's temperature control system is overloaded. The body normally cools itself by sweating. But under some conditions, sweating just isn't enough. In such cases, a person's body temperature rises rapidly. Very high body temperatures may damage the brain or other vital organs. Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions that can limit the ability to regulate temperature include old age, youth (age 0-4), obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use and alcohol use.

Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 years of age and older, people who are overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

by Marcia
Anderson and Dr.
Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA



Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, those with high blood pressure, and those working or exercising in a hot environment.

Warning Signs of Heat Exhaustion:

The warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

The skin may be cool and moist. The pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

Steps to take to cool the body during heat exhaustion:

- Give cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Rest.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Seek an air-conditioned environment.
- Wear lightweight clothing.

HEAT CRAMPS

by Marcia Anderson and Dr. Changlu Wang
Funded by US EPA



Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms – usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs – that may occur in association with strenuous activity. People who sweat a lot during strenuous activity are prone to heat cramps. This sweating depletes the body’s salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion. Seek medical attention if you or your client have heart problems or are on a low-sodium diet.

What to do if heat cramps occur:

If medical attention is not necessary, take the following steps:

- Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place.
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in 1 hour.

HEAT RASH



Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather. It can occur at any age but is most common in young children. Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

What to do if heat rash occurs:

- The best treatment for heat rash is to provide a cooler, less humid environment. Keep the affected area dry. Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/faq.html>

Can medications increase the risk of heat-related illness?

The risk for heat-related illness and death may increase among people using the following drugs: (1) psychotropics, which affect psychic function, behavior, or experience (e.g. haloperidol or chlorpromazine); (2) medications for Parkinson's disease, because they can inhibit perspiration; (3) tranquilizers such as phenothiazines, butyrophenones, and thiozanthenes; and (4) diuretic medications or "water pills" that affect fluid balance in the body.

How effective are electric fans in preventing heat-related illness?

Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off. Air conditioning is the strongest protective factor against heat-related illness. Exposure to air conditioning for even a few hours a day will reduce the risk for heat-related illness. Consider visiting a shopping mall or public library for a few hours.

How can people protect their health when temperatures are extremely high?

Remember to keep cool and use common sense. Drink plenty of fluid, replace salts and minerals, wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen, pace yourself, stay cool indoors, schedule outdoor activities carefully, use a buddy system, monitor those at risk, and adjust to the environment.

How much should I drink during hot weather?

During hot weather you will need to increase your fluid intake, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink enough non-alcoholic cool fluids each hour to maintain normal color and amount of urine output.

Should I take salt tablets during hot weather?

Do not take salt tablets unless directed by your doctor. Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. These are necessary for your body and must be replaced. The easiest and safest way to do this is through your diet. Drink fruit juice or a sports beverage when you exercise or work in the heat.

What is the best clothing for hot weather or a heat wave?

Wear as little clothing as possible when you are at home. Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. In the hot sun, a wide-brimmed hat will provide shade and keep the head cool. If you must go outdoors, be sure to apply sunscreen 30 minutes prior to going out and continue to reapply according to the package directions. Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool itself and causes a loss of body fluids. It also causes pain and damages the skin.

What should I do if I work in a hot environment?

Pace yourself. If you are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity. Get into a cool area or at least in the shade, and rest, especially if you become lightheaded, confused, weak, or faint.



Checklists For Home Healthcare Workers' Safety

Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare

EMPLOYER	YES	NO
Is there an active safety program with a safety manager and a safety committee that includes employees from across the company?		
Does initial and annual training include safety hazards and prevention?		
Does annual training review new safety issues identified throughout the previous year?		
Do workers have a way to obtain necessary ergonomic equipment for the home they work in?		
Does initial and annual training include information on latex allergies?		
Are nonlatex gloves available?		
Is a bloodborne pathogens plan available?		
Is the bloodborne pathogens plan updated annually?		
Is the bloodborne pathogens plan part of initial training?		
Is the bloodborne pathogens plan part of annual training?		
Are workers part of the selection process for needle devices with safety features?		
Are workers taught how to identify stressors?		
Are workers taught techniques to reduce stress?		
Do workers have access to an employee assistance plan or other means of counseling support?		
Is there a no-weapons policy for patient homes?		
If there is not a policy prohibiting weapons in the home, is there a policy requiring weapons to be disabled and locked up before the worker arrives?		
Is the location of a new patient researched to determine local crime statistics?		
Are workers taught how to recognize violent or aggressive behavior and how to diffuse an angry patient?		
Are workers taught to recognize illegal drug activities?		
Are workers taught what to do if they feel uncomfortable about a patient's community or if they believe that they are in danger?		
Are workers taught how to identify verbal abuse and what to do about it?		
Has an infection control and prevention plan been developed?		

(Continued)

CHECKLISTS FOR HOME HEALTHCARE WORKERS' SAFETY CONTINUED...

Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare

EMPLOYER (Continued)	YES	NO
Has a pandemic influenza plan been developed?		
Is there an animal-control policy requiring animals to be restrained?		
Are workers taught how to deal with threatening weather?		
Are workers taught what to do in the event of a chemical spill or an act of terrorism?		
Are workers taught safe driving skills?		
Do workers have to report all incidents and traffic offenses?		
Has the agency verified safe driving records for all home healthcare providers?		
Are workers' driver licenses verified annually?		

WORKERS	YES	NO
Does your initial and annual training include information on the following?*		
Preventing musculoskeletal disorders		
Obtaining ergonomic equipment		
Learning about latex allergies		
Reviewing the bloodborne pathogens plan		
Promoting infection control		
Identifying stressors		
Reducing stress		
Recognizing violent or aggressive behavior		
Calming an angry patient		
Recognizing illegal drug activities		
Knowing what to do if you feel uncomfortable about a patient's community		

(Continued)

CHECKLISTS FOR HOME HEALTHCARE WORKERS' SAFETY

Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare

WORKERS (Continued)	YES	NO
Knowing what to do if you believe you are in danger		
Identifying verbal abuse		
Knowing what to do if you believe you are being verbally abused		
Knowing what to do if you encounter an unsanitary home		
Preventing slips and falls		
Dealing with threatening weather		
Knowing what to do in the event of a chemical spill or an act of terrorism		
Knowing how to drive safely		
Do you know how to report your safety concerns?		
Do you know what to do if you are injured on the job?		
Are sufficient patient-related ergonomic assistive devices provided?		
Do you have appropriate personal protective equipment, including gloves?		
Are nonlatex gloves available from your employer? ☒☒		
Do you know the symptoms of latex allergy?		
Do you consistently follow standard precautions with all blood and potentially infectious materials?		
Do you have a properly labeled, leak-proof, puncture-resistant sharps container?		
Do you know what to do if you feel threatened or verbally abused?		
Are weapons removed from the area of service (for example, bedroom, living room)?		
Do you have a cell phone or two way radio?		
Do you follow infection control and prevention measures (for example, hand washing)?		
Are animals restrained in the home before you render service?		
Do you know what to do if you find unsanitary conditions (for example, lack of heating, lack of cooling, lack of potable water, insects)?		

(Continued)

CHECKLISTS FOR HOME HEALTHCARE WORKERS' SAFETY CONTINUED...

Occupational Hazards in Home Healthcare

WORKERS (Continued)	YES	NO
Do you wear sturdy, low heeled, slip-resistant shoes?		
Do you have an accurate map or global positioning system (GPS) to locate the home?		
Do you observe your surroundings and park in well lit areas, away from visual obstructions (for example, large bushes someone could hide behind)?		
Do you wear your seatbelt?		
Do you avoid talking on a cell phone while driving?		
Do you avoid talking on a cell phone while driving?		

*This suggested training list is not meant to be a substitute for regulatory training requirements

(Continued)

HELPFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Adult Protective Services	1-866-800-1409
American Red Cross.....	312-729-6100
Attorney General's Office	
Chicago.....	1-800-243-5377
Springfield.....	1-800-252-2518
Auto Safety Hotline.....	1-800-424-9393
Cancer Information Service.....	1-800-422-6237
County Office on Aging/Ombudsman.....	1-800-252-8966
Chicago Department of Family & Support Services.....	312.744.4016
Drug and Alcohol Abuse Hotline.....	1-800-622-4357
Domestic Violence Helpline:	
• (Voice)	1-877-TO END DV or 1-877-863-6338
• (TTY).....	1-877-863-6339
Elder Abuse Report Hotline	
8 am - 5 pm.....	1-800-252-8966
After 5 pm.....	1-800-279-0400
Emergency Services and Disaster Agency.....	1-800-782-7860
Eye Care Information.....	1-800-222-3937
Hearing Aid Consumer Protection Program	
(Voice and TDD) Answering Service.....	1-800-573-3270
Human Rights Violation.....	1-866-274-8023
Illinois Area Agency on Aging Senior Helpline	
(Voice and TDD).....	1-800-252-8966
Illinois Assistive Technology Project.....	1-800-852-5110
Illinois Department on Aging Help Line.....	1.866.800.1409
Illinois Department of Commerce & Community Affairs	
Chicago.....	312-814-7179
Springfield.....	217-782-2024
Office of Domestic Violence.....	1.877.863.6338 (TTY) 1.877.863.6339
Social Services.....	1-800-843-6154

YOUR SAFETY MATTERS: CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

