

Title of Alert : Hot Weather Alert

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No: 4

**We are experiencing some wonderful heat and sunshine at present but:  
please look after yourself and your clients!**

## **During Hot Weather - What to Do to Prevent Heat Problems**

### **Ensure staff and clients drink plenty of fluids**

- Increase fluid intake regardless of activity level
- Don't wait until clients are thirsty to offer fluids
- Offer at least two drinks an hour
- Avoid sugary drinks and caffeine these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also avoid very cold drinks because they can cause stomach cramps
- Please encourage clients who have leave to take a bottle of water with them
- Staff on escort should also carry fluids.

### **Wear appropriate clothing and apply sunscreen**

- Encourage clients to wear cool comfortable clothing
- Choose lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing
- Sunburn affects the body's ability to cool itself and causes a loss of body fluids. It also causes pain and damages the skin
- If you are lucky enough to have an outside space where clients can sit outside keep them safe by covering their head and putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher
- Clients and staff on leave and escort should be encouraged to apply sunscreen.

### **Schedule outdoor activities carefully**

- If clients have leave try to limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Try to rest often in shady areas so that the body's thermostat will have a chance to recover

### **Stay cool indoors**

- If you do not have air conditioning, keep curtains closed
- 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 cold compresses at the neck and wrists may be a better way to cool vulnerable clients.

### **Use common sense**

- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals - they add heat to the body
- Drink plenty of fluids and replace salts and minerals in the body
- Vulnerable clients should be dressed in cool, loose clothing and shade their heads and faces with hats or an umbrella.
- Limit sun exposure during mid-day hours
- Provide plenty of fresh water for your clients and ensure water on the ward is kept fresh and left in a shady area
- Check bed clothes and ensure they have light covering
- If you are looking after patients in the community please think of those who might be vulnerable and check they have enough to drink.