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## Be prepared to beat the heat

The heat is on in south west Sydney this week, and with temperatures set to soar, local health experts are urging people to stay safe by keeping cool.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Director of Public Health Dr Stephen Conaty said long periods of extreme heat could have serious impacts on people's health.

“Some people cannot cope as well with hot conditions as others. For example, elderly people and people taking certain medications are less able to produce sweat. Also young children produce more body heat, sweat less and have faster rising body temperatures, Dr Conaty said.

“Exposure to high temperatures can make existing illnesses seriously worse (for example trigger a heart attack), cause serious permanent injuries (damage to the brain or other vital organs) as a result of untreated heat stroke, and in extreme cases result in death.

“However, planning ahead and being prepared for extreme heat is important and there are some simple steps people can take to stay healthy in the heat,” he said.

Dr Conaty has outlined the following heat safety tips:

- Drink lots of water, preferably every 15-20 minutes
- Avoid drinking alcohol, sugary or caffeinated drinks that can increase dehydration
- If your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather
- Feed breastfed infants more frequently to help keep up their fluids
- Never leave babies, children or animals alone in the car, even for a short time
- Keep as cool as possible by wearing light, loose, comfortable clothing
- Keep out of the sun in the hottest part of the day (between 11am and 5pm)
- Try to stay in an air-conditioned environment – shopping centres and libraries are a good refuge if you don't have air conditioning at home
- Avoid outdoor exercise or strenuous activity, especially in the middle of the day
- If you do go outside, carry a bottle of water with you, apply sunscreen and wear a hat.
- If you have an older friend or relative with health or mobility problems check that they are OK, they know what to do to keep cool, and they know who to call if when feel unwell.

For more information on how to beat the heat visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat)