

## Media Release

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13 December 2017

### How to beat the heat this summer

With temperatures predicted to soar this week, local health experts are urging people to keep cool and stay safe in the heat.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Acting Director Public Health Unit, Dr Kate Alexander, 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," Dr Alexander said.

"Also young children produce more body heat, sweat less and have faster rising body temperatures."

Dr Alexander said exposure to high temperatures could make existing illnesses much worse, for instance triggering a heart attack.

"Untreated heat stroke can cause serious permanent injuries to the brain and other vital organs and in extreme cases, high temperatures can result in death," she said.

"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."

To stay safe in the heat, Dr Alexander said people should:

- 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
- Wear 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 they are OK, that they know what to do to keep cool, and that they know who to call if they 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)