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How to beat the heat and smoke this summer

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

South Western Sydney Local Health District Public Health Unit Acting Director, Dr Kate Alexander said long periods of extreme heat can have serious impacts on a person's health.

With the barometer set to reach more than 40 degrees in Sydney's south west on Thursday and Saturday this week, Dr Alexander said preparing for the heat should be a priority.

"Some people cannot cope as well with hot conditions as others. Elderly people and those taking certain medications are less able to produce sweat," she said.

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

"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."

The key to managing any hot day is planning ahead and being prepared, according to Dr Alexander.

"There are some really simple steps people can take to stay healthy in the heat," she said.

"Drink lots of water regularly but if your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink on hot weather days.

"Avoid drinking alcohol, sugary or caffeinated drinks, feed breastfed infants more frequently and never leave babies, children or animals alone in the car."

Other tips for hot weather is to wear loose, comfortable clothing, keep out of the sun in the hottest part of the day, avoid outdoor exercise or strenuous activity and, if you do go outside, carry a bottle of water, apply sunscreen and wear a hat.

"If you have an older friend or relative with health or mobility issues, check in on them and make sure they're keeping cool.

"Smoke is an added hazard this summer. It is generally better to keep the doors and windows closed and try to stay cool with a fan or air conditioner, on hot and smoky days.

"If you need relief from smoke during the day, air conditioned shopping centres or libraries are good options for a little relief."

For more information on how to beat the heat, visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat