

# Are you heat-vulnerable?

## ***Everyone's health is at risk in extreme heat***

But certain people face higher associated risks in a heatwave. Learn what factors make you and your neighbours more vulnerable:

**UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS - CAREGIVER DEPENDENCE**

**AGE - SOCIAL ISOLATION - PHYSICAL STRAIN OUTDOORS**

## **OLDER & ELDERLY ADULTS**

Older adults may have reduced thirst sensation, fitness level and sweating ability. Any visual, cognitive, and hearing impairments or agility and mobility challenges can increase their risk, as can potentially higher degrees of social isolation.

## **PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS OR PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT**

Physiological characteristics of a person's illness or impairment may amplify their heat-related health risks. Certain medications like antihypertensives, antidepressants, antipsychotics, anti-Parkinson's agents affect heat sensitivity. The impact of a person's condition on their lifestyle may mean they have a high level of social isolation or dependence on their caregiver, family or friends for assistance with daily living.

**Check in on people in your community who you know are at higher heat-risk and likely in need of extra assistance during a heatwave.**

**If you are someone at risk, have a plan in place with your community and support network for check-ins.**

## **INFANTS & YOUNG CHILDREN**

Children are highly dependent on their caregivers to regulate heat impacts. They are more susceptible because they have less ability to sweat and aren't able to increase their heart rate. Children also produce more body heat when active, and gain heat faster from their environments.

## **OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS**

Workers like farmers or construction workers are used to environmental exposure at the workplace, but risk is heightened with increased physical strain, variation in health and safety regulations, and irregular heat exposure for new workers who aren't yet acclimatized to conditions.

## **RURAL HOUSELESS & DISADVANTAGED**

Limited finances, social isolation, reduced access to water and cool places, and reduced access to health care and social services combine with lack of equipped shelter put this group at high-risk.

## **THE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE**

Marathon runners, recreational athletes and people who walk or bike all have greater environmental exposures. They may have a skewed risk perception, expecting to perform as usual despite the temperatures.

## **NEWCOMERS TO CANADA & TOURISTS**

Language and literacy barriers for non-English or non-French speakers, as well as limited knowledge of local alert systems, health and social service programs put this group at greater risk.