

## Beat the heat: keep cool at home checklist

This checklist will help you to identify if a home may be at risk of overheating and how to reduce this risk.

While we all look forward to the hot weather, homes can sometimes overheat (become uncomfortably hot). Everyone's health can be at risk during periods of hot weather but some people are particularly vulnerable to heat. A hot home can worsen existing health conditions and can be fatal.

### Homes more likely to overheat

Homes that can sometimes overheat during warmer weather include:

- flats on the top floor because heat rises
- homes with opening windows on just one side of the property, as this means there is less ventilation through the home
- homes with little shading from the sun either externally, for example no shutters or shades, or internally, for example no curtains or blinds
- large east, west or south-facing windows which do not have shade from the sun (for example external shutters or internal curtain and blinds)
- homes located in a densely built-up urban area with little green space nearby as these areas may experience even hotter temperatures
- some highly insulated or energy-efficient homes may trap heat inside. Making homes energy efficient has lots of health and other benefits but care needs to be taken to avoid overheating in the summer
- homes with low efficiency appliances that release excess heat, such as poorly insulated hot water systems
- homes with restricted opening of windows, for example if there is a safety catch installed

### Residents who may be at higher risk of ill health from overheating

There are lots of reasons why some people might be at higher risk of becoming unwell in hot weather, including:

- older, especially aged 65 years and over (note change from previous guidance of aged 75 years and above)
- children, especially aged 5 and under 5
- people who live alone and/or are socially isolated
- people with long-term health conditions (particularly heart and breathing problems)

- people taking certain medications
- people who need the assistance of others for their routine activities
- people with difficulty adapting their behaviour in warmer weather (for example, due to dementia, mental health issues or alcohol/recreational drug use)
- people who are at home during the hottest part of the day (for example, small children or home workers)

## **Things you can do to prepare your home for hot weather**

We often get some warning when a period of hot weather is coming, and it is always helpful to plan for every summer period. There are things you can do to prepare for and reduce the risk of your home overheating during hot weather:

1. Consider installing internal blinds or curtains, or external shutters, roller blinds or awnings are also very effective.
2. If you have a ventilation system in your home, check this is switched on and operating in 'summer mode' if it has one.
3. Check that fridges, freezers, and fans are working properly, for example by checking that your food is remaining cold or frozen.
4. Check medicines can be stored according to the instructions on the packaging.
5. If insulating or refurbishing your home, ask installers for advice about reducing overheating.
6. Growing plants outside can provide shade, which may be particularly helpful in front of south-facing windows, while plants inside may help cool the air.

## **Things you can do in your home during hot weather**

When the hot weather arrives there are several quick and easy steps that we can all take to reduce heat in the home:

1. If possible, shade or cover windows.
2. Open windows (when it is safe to do so) when the air feels cooler outside, for example at night, and try to get air flowing through the home.
3. Use electric fans if the air temperature is below 35°C, but do not aim the fan directly at your body as this can lead to dehydration.
4. Check that your heating is turned off.
5. To reduce heat generated in the home, turn off lights and electrical equipment that are not in use and consider cooking at cooler times of the day.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice/beat-the-heat-keep-cool-at-home-checklist>

6. Move to a cooler part of the house, especially for sleeping if possible.
7. It may be cooler outside in the shade or in a public building (such as places of worship, local libraries, or supermarkets) so consider a visit as a way of cooling down if you are able to safely travel there without putting yourself at more risk from the heat.

## Where to get help

Health advice during hot weather:

[Beat the heat](#)

[NHS advice on heat exhaustion and heat stroke](#)

[NHS advice on sunscreen and sun safety](#)

## Advice on preparing your home for hot weather

If you live in social housing, you may be able to get help and support for your home from the following:

- your [local council](#)
- an accredited home improvement agency or handyperson service through [First Stop Care Advice](#) for older people, or [Home Improvement Agencies](#) (0300 124 0315)
- your social letting agency
- your social housing provider
- [Citizen's Advice](#)

If you own your home (owner occupied) you may be able to get help and support from an accredited home improvement agency or handyperson service through [First Stop Care Advice](#) for older people, or [Home Improvement Agencies](#) (0300 124 0315).

If you live in a rented home, you may be able to get help and support from the following:

- your [local council](#)
- your social letting agency
- [Citizen's Advice](#)
- your private landlord