

Staying Cool and Safe

Summer is coming which means lots of fun in the sun!

Nevertheless, the weather can get extremely hot and quickly go from fun to **dangerous**. Extreme heat can be very life threatening. Learn what extreme heat is so you can protect yourself.

Extreme Heat:

- **Heat Storm:** Generally, heat storms occur when temperatures exceed **100°F** over a large area for three days in a row. Heat storms can be especially dangerous and lead to several heat-related illnesses.
- **Heat Wave:** More than 48 hours of high heat (**90°F** or higher) and high humidity (80 percent relative humidity or higher) are expected.

Important: Pay attention to your local weather forecast so you can prepare for a heat storm or a heat wave.

Here is some helpful information to stay safe and enjoy the summer.

Heat-related Illnesses

Heat-related illnesses can become serious or even deadly if unattended. Some of the risks people face from too much heat exposure and not staying cool are:

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal muscles or the legs. Generally, loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes the cramps.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. With heat exhaustion, sweat does not evaporate as it should and the body is not cooled properly.

For more information please call:
Cooling Centers: 1-877-474-3266 General Information: 1-800-PGE-5000

Signs of Heat Exhaustion:

- cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin
- increased sweating, tiredness
- headaches
- fainting, nausea or vomiting
- fast, shallow breath, dizziness
- muscle cramps, weakness
- a weak, rapid pulse

Warning: If left unchecked, heat exhaustion can progress to **heat stroke**.

Heat Stroke: Also known as sunstroke, heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

Signs of Heat Stroke:

- very high body temperature (over 105 ° F)
- rapid pulse
- shallow breathing
- hot, red, dry skin
- confusion
- throbbing headache
- nausea
- failure to sweat
- unconsciousness
- seizures

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Treating a Heat-related Illness

For Heat Cramps or Heat Exhaustion:

- **Cool the body slowly.** Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position.
- **Give fluids.** If the person is fully awake and alert, give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them, as they can make conditions worse.
- **Loosen clothing.** Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as towels or wet sheets. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if the person refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness, or otherwise appears in need of medical attention.

For Heat Stroke:

- **Call "911."** Heat stroke is life-threatening and requires immediate emergency medical attention.
- **Cool the body.** Then start to cool the body. Move the person to a cooler place. Wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, wrap them in a cloth and place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. Keep this process going until emergency medical help arrives.

People at high risk:

- **Seniors**
- **People with jobs that require physical exertion**
- **Infants and young children**
- **Animals and pets**
- **People with illnesses:** People with medical conditions like diabetes, respiratory problems, heart disease, obesity and alcoholism are at higher risk to suffer from extreme heat.

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Staying Cool and Safe:

- **Go to a cool place:** Consider going to an air-conditioned mall, library or other public place that will be cool. Look out for cooling centers in your area through your local emergency office. Go to a neighbor, friend or relative's house that has air-conditioning.
- **Stay in the shade:** direct sunlight can speed up the effect the heat has on your body.
- **Stay hydrated:** Keep drinking plenty of water, even if you're not thirsty. Your body needs more fluids than usual when it's very hot. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.
- **Take showers:** A cool shower or bath is a great way to stay cool and much more effective than using an electric fan.
- **Limit physical activity:** Take many breaks during the day. Do outdoor activities in the morning hours or evening hours to avoid being in the afternoon heat.
- **Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing:** If you are outside, don't forget to wear a wide-brimmed hat or carry an umbrella to protect your head and neck.
- **Wear sunscreen:** Protect your skin and reduce the risk of sunburn. Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool itself.
- **Plan ahead:** Check the weather forecast to know the temperatures.
- **Keep a phone:** Make sure you have a cell phone or hard-wired, single-line telephone. Cordless phones will not work without electricity.
- **Keep an emergency contact list:** Keep a list of emergency phone numbers.
- **Have a buddy system:** Have someone be a buddy where you, a family member, a friend or a local volunteer check in on the elderly or frail during a heat wave.
- **Check up on loved ones:** Call your neighbors, friends or relatives if you believe they might be susceptible to heat exposure.
- **Have back-up power:** If a member of your household depends on life support or needs other medical equipment, have an emergency plan in place, including back-up power supply. If you are senior or have an illness, you may be eligible for PG&E's Medical Baseline Program for discounted electric rates and Third-party Notification Program for rotating outage alerts. Go to www.pge.com/financialassistance.
- **Get help:** Sudden onset of dizziness, rapid heartbeat, nausea, headache, chest pain, mental changes or breathing problems are all warning signs that you should seek immediate attention.

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Saving Energy:

When it gets hot, a lot of energy is used to keep cool. Here are some useful ways to stay cool and still save energy and save on your bill.

- Keep your thermostat at **78°F** when you are home and at **85°F** when you leave your home
- Keep many **bottles of water** in the fridge so that you always have a cool refreshment
- Switch off **unnecessary lights**
- **Avoid using appliances** during the peak heat of the day
- Use your **microwave** to heat food instead your of the oven
- **Reset your pool pump** to run during off-peak hours of the day
- Use **energy efficient products**. PG&E provides give you money back through **rebates** (www.pge.com/smartenergy) for selected items. Also, check to see if you qualify for **Energy Partners** (www.pge.com/energypartners) providing energy efficient products for our customers who need it most.

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