



Extreme heat is the deadliest weather-related hazard in the United States.

EXTREME HEAT IS INCREASING, BUT SO ARE OUR

TOOLS TO RESPOND.

Planning, education, and community solutions can save lives.

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke. If conditions do not improve, seek medical help.

Heat stroke can lead to permanent disability or death. Call 911 if signs of heat stroke are observed.



SOURCES

ABOUT US

The **CLEO Institute** is a women-led nonprofit, nonpartisan organization exclusively dedicated to climate education, advocacy, and engagement. The devastating hurricanes, increased flooding, and rising temperatures underscore the importance of CLEO's work.

Building community resilience and adaptive capacity requires an informed, engaged, and prepared public. With a top-down, bottom-up approach, we work with government, business, academic, and community leaders to advocate for long-term resilient solutions for climate action.

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EXTREME HEAT & HEALTH



WHAT IS EXTREME HEAT?

Extreme heat occurs when the heat index is dangerously high for **2-3 consecutive days**. The heat index, or “feels like” temperature, accounts for temperature and humidity. Extreme heat can present significant dangers to human health and ecosystems, including plants and animals.

WHO IS THE MOST VULNERABLE TO EXTREME HEAT?

Heat exposure can affect both physical and mental health. Some groups are more vulnerable to extreme heat.

These groups include pregnant individuals, elders, children, those with chronic illnesses like cardiovascular diseases (e.g., high blood pressure), those taking medication that affects body temperature regulation, outdoor athletes, and people who work or live outdoors.

Exposure to extreme heat can contribute to acute heat illnesses, chronic disease exacerbation, adverse pregnancy outcomes like preterm birth, and various injuries. When there is high humidity, it becomes harder for sweat to evaporate and cool the body. As a result, there is an increased risk for developing heat-related illnesses.

WHAT ARE HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES AND SIGNS TO WATCH FOR?

HEAT CRAMPS	muscle cramps, heavy sweating, thirst, fatigue
HEAT EXHAUSTION	weakness, fainting, nausea
HEAT STROKE	high fever, rapid pulse, confusion, possible seizures

HOW CAN YOU STAY SAFE?



Drink lots of water



Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes



Take cool showers or use fans and cold compresses



Avoid outdoor activities during peak heat; stay in the shade or go to a cooling center if available in your area



If you have medical conditions that put you at increased risk for heat-related illnesses, talk to your doctor about staying safe

WHY IS EXTREME HEAT BECOMING MORE COMMON & LASTING LONGER?

When we burn fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and gas to produce energy, extra heat-trapping gases such as carbon dioxide and methane are released into the atmosphere. This carbon pollution traps additional heat in our climate system, which increases global average temperatures. Deforestation also impacts the planet’s natural cooling mechanism.

CITIES OFTEN FACE EVEN HOTTER CONDITIONS DUE TO THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT:

- Surfaces like asphalt and concrete absorb and radiate heat
- Less tree cover and vegetation means less natural cooling
- Dense buildings, traffic, and energy use release additional heat

WHAT ARE SOLUTIONS FOR ADDRESSING EXTREME HEAT?

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE HELPS COOL CITIES AND REDUCE HEAT RISKS:

- Plant trees to create shade and lower local temperatures
- Use vegetation and water-absorbing plants to cool and clean the air
- Replace heat-absorbing surfaces with reflective or permeable materials
- Install green roofs, rain gardens, and bioswales to cool and manage stormwater
- Create shaded public transit stops and accessible cooling centers
- Retrofit buildings with cool roofs and better insulation

COLLECTIVE ACTIONS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Support local tree planting in neighborhoods with little green space
- Advocate for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Promote city planning that includes heat action plans
- Check the weather daily, know heat-related illness symptoms, and help others stay informed

