

Table 1. Heat risk, mitigation and management strategies using a human life stage analysis

Group	Heat risk	Mitigation and management
General public 	HRI – heat stress, heat exhaustion, heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand heat: recognise how it affects activities and identify symptoms of heat-related illnesses Educate patients on heat risks and prevention Stay informed by monitoring heat warnings and planning ahead Drink water regularly; avoid caffeine and alcohol Dress in light, breathable clothing and wear a wide-brimmed hat Be SunSmart; seek shade and use sunscreen outdoors Schedule outdoor activities during cooler parts of the day Refrigerate perishable foods and store medicines as directed Provide information on affordable cooling solutions (eg fans, air conditioning) and how to create a cool space at home using available resources Identify nearby cool refuges if home cooling is insufficient Advocate for heat safety policies in workplaces, schools and sports Support policies for equitable access to cooling measures, financial aid for air conditioning and energy costs, and building heat-resilient homes, towns and cities
Pregnant/lactating women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preterm and early term birth Cardiovascular stress Intrauterine growth restriction Pre-eclampsia Impact on milk production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide targeted education and resources to at-risk groups, emphasising the importance of staying cool during pregnancy Monitor for signs of preterm or early term birth and know when to seek medical assistance Maintain hydration for maternal health and milk production Avoid exercising in hot weather, especially in high humidity Schedule breaks in a cool environment to prevent overheating and reduce cardiovascular stress If feeling unwell, lie down and rest in a cool place (if available) Attend scheduled prenatal and postnatal check-ups
Babies and young children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater risk of HRI and dehydration due to under-developed sweat glands, larger surface area-to-body volume ratio Unsettled behaviour and disrupted sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide targeted education for parents and caregivers on heat risks and prevention Recognise symptoms of heat stress, such as lethargy or excessive crying, and know when to seek medical assistance Offer frequent small feeds (every 30–60 min) For babies aged >6 months, provide cooled boiled water For babies aged <6 months, provide only breast milk or formula For older babies, offer hydrating foods like watermelon or ice blocks made from breast milk, formula or diluted fruit juice Use sunshades in cars and prams Offer water play in shaded areas or give lukewarm baths Cover prams with a light, damp cloth, refreshing it every 15–20 min Use lightweight bedding and ensure proper ventilation

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Table 1. Heat risk, mitigation and management strategies using a human life stage analysis (cont'd)

Group	Heat risk	Mitigation and management
Children and young adults 	Increased risk of HRI especially during outdoor and/or sporting events, music events and drug use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide targeted education on heat risks and prevention for parents, caregivers and educators Adjust outdoor activities, sports and events to cooler parts of the day Encourage regular hydration breaks in shade areas during outdoor activities Teach effective cooling techniques, such as using cool, damp cloths or taking cool showers Emphasise the importance of drinking water before feeling thirsty, especially during active play Advise minimising or avoiding drug and alcohol use during extreme heat Promote access to water, fans, air conditioning and shaded spaces, along with heat safety policies in schools and sports organisations
Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased violence, mental health exacerbations Higher risk of HRI during outdoor work or physical activities Increased alcohol and soft drink consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide tailored education based on occupation, hobbies and interests Take regular hydration breaks in shaded areas Stop work during extremely hot and humid days Adjust sporting activities to avoid peak heat Review the impact of regular medication, alcohol and drug use in extreme heat conditions
Elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased risk of HRI with age, use of medications and comorbidities, which affect thermoregulation, fluid balance Increased mortality rate Poor sleep Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess need for additional support and encourage building a support network Educate on heat risks, prevention and early signs of heat stress Refer to community support programs (eg Red Cross) Recommend food delivery and telehealth to avoid going out during extreme heat events Maintain a contact list for cooling centres, support persons and community transport Develop heat action plans within chronic disease management or health assessments, including medication guidance Liaise with aged care providers on heatwave management Consider keeping a register of high-risk individuals
People with disabilities, comorbid conditions, including mental illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher vulnerability and increased mortality risk Exacerbation of symptoms (eg multiple sclerosis, mental health) Increased risk of heat-related symptoms due to medications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess if additional support or carers are needed and encourage building a support network Educate patients and caregivers on heat risks, prevention and early signs of heat stress Include heat action plans in chronic disease or mental health care plans, with specific medication guidance Coordinate with carers, NDIS providers and health workers on heatwave management Ensure cooling centres and resources are accessible for individuals with mobility challenges Advise on adjusting medication schedules during extreme heat, in consultation with healthcare providers

Note: General public advice is broadly applicable to all groups.

HRI, heat-related illness; NDIS, National Disability Insurance Scheme.