

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.