

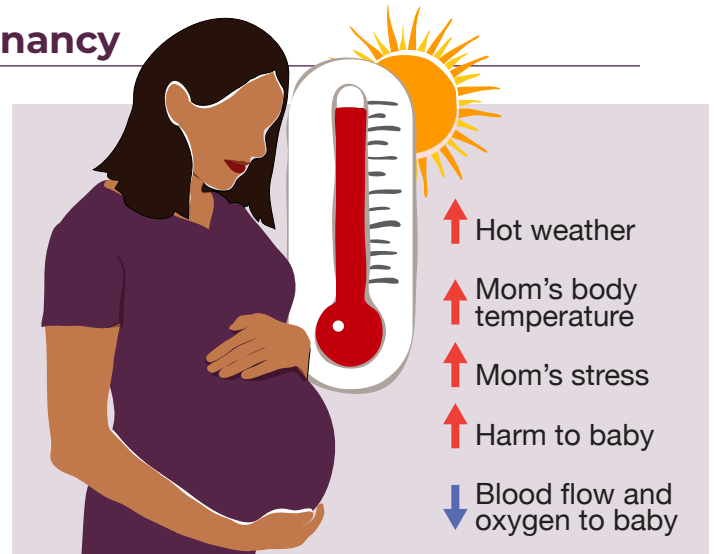
Pregnancy and heat — Protect yourself and your baby

Heat can be dangerous during pregnancy

Heat illness happens when your body is overheated because of hot weather.

- Some symptoms of heat illness are cramps, heavy sweating, fainting, dizziness, and dehydration.
- Being pregnant makes it harder for your body to cool down. It also makes you more likely to become dehydrated or feel other heat illness symptoms.
- If your body stays too hot, your baby could grow too slowly or you could go into labor early.
- Babies who are born early or are very small can have health problems, and can have trouble learning.

Staying cool on very hot days and even on warm days is important to protect you and your baby.



Symptoms of heat illness

- Heavy sweating
- Being very thirsty
- Dry skin or dry mouth
- Dark-colored urine (pee) or very little urine
- Muscle cramps
- Fast heart rate or fast breathing
- Headaches or dizziness
- Increasing Braxton Hicks contractions or cramping
- Nausea or vomiting*
- Confusion*
- Seizures*
- High fever*
- Slurred speech*

* Could be symptoms of heat stroke requiring immediate help.

Lowering your risk for heat illness

- Drink lots of water or low-sugar fluids. Avoid caffeine.
- Eat water-rich foods like watermelon, spinach, berries, cucumber, lettuce, and celery.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Use cotton bedsheets.
- Close your blinds or curtains during the day.
- Keep doors inside your home open to increase air flow, unless a room isn't used at all.
- Wait until nighttime to use appliances that get hot, like the oven, clothes dryer, and iron. Wash hot-water loads of laundry at night.
- Exercise during cooler times of the day (early morning and later evening) and stay indoors when possible.
- Mist or sponge your skin with water when using electric fans to cool off more quickly.
- Go to community cooling centers, malls, or other air-conditioned places if possible.



Being pregnant puts you at risk for heat illness. You are at added risk if you...

- Work outside.
- Wash dishes or cook in a restaurant.
- Work in a warehouse or factory.
- Are under 18 years old. Smaller body size and decreased tolerance to heat can increase risk for teens.
- Are Black, as Black people who are pregnant already have the highest risk for birth complications, like the risk of the baby being born too soon.
- Have been told by your doctor that you are at risk for giving birth early or for having a very small baby.
- Live in an area where there is not much shade from trees, or that has a lot of roads, sidewalks, or parking lots.
- Live near busy roads, or in places where air pollution is bad.
- Have a hard time finding medical care and healthy food, and don't have strong community support.
- Don't have air conditioning or don't use it.
- Live in an older home that doesn't keep heat out.
- Can't easily get to a cooling center, mall, or other air-conditioned place.

When to call for help

- Even minor heat illness symptoms can be dangerous in pregnancy.
- Call your doctor or go to the clinic immediately if you can't cool down.
- Call 911 if you have severe symptoms like very high fever, seizures, vomiting, confusion or slurred speech. These may be symptoms of heat stroke, are life-threatening, and require immediate medical help.



More information about heat illness and pregnancy

Heat – Reproductive Health

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/repro/heat.html>

En español: La seguridad reproductiva y el lugar de trabajo

<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/topics/reprod/calor.html>

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>

En español: Signos y síntomas de advertencia de enfermedades relacionadas con el calor:

<https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>

Summer heat brings special health risks for pregnant women

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/07/01/summer-heat-brings-special-health-risks-for-pregnant-women>

California Department of Public Health guidance for extreme heat

https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/Extreme%20Heat%20Pages/BI_Natural-Disasters_Extreme-Heat.aspx

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

<https://news.caloes.ca.gov/its-getting-hot-in-here-how-to-stay-safe-in-extreme-heat>