

# Heat Waves

& HEALTH

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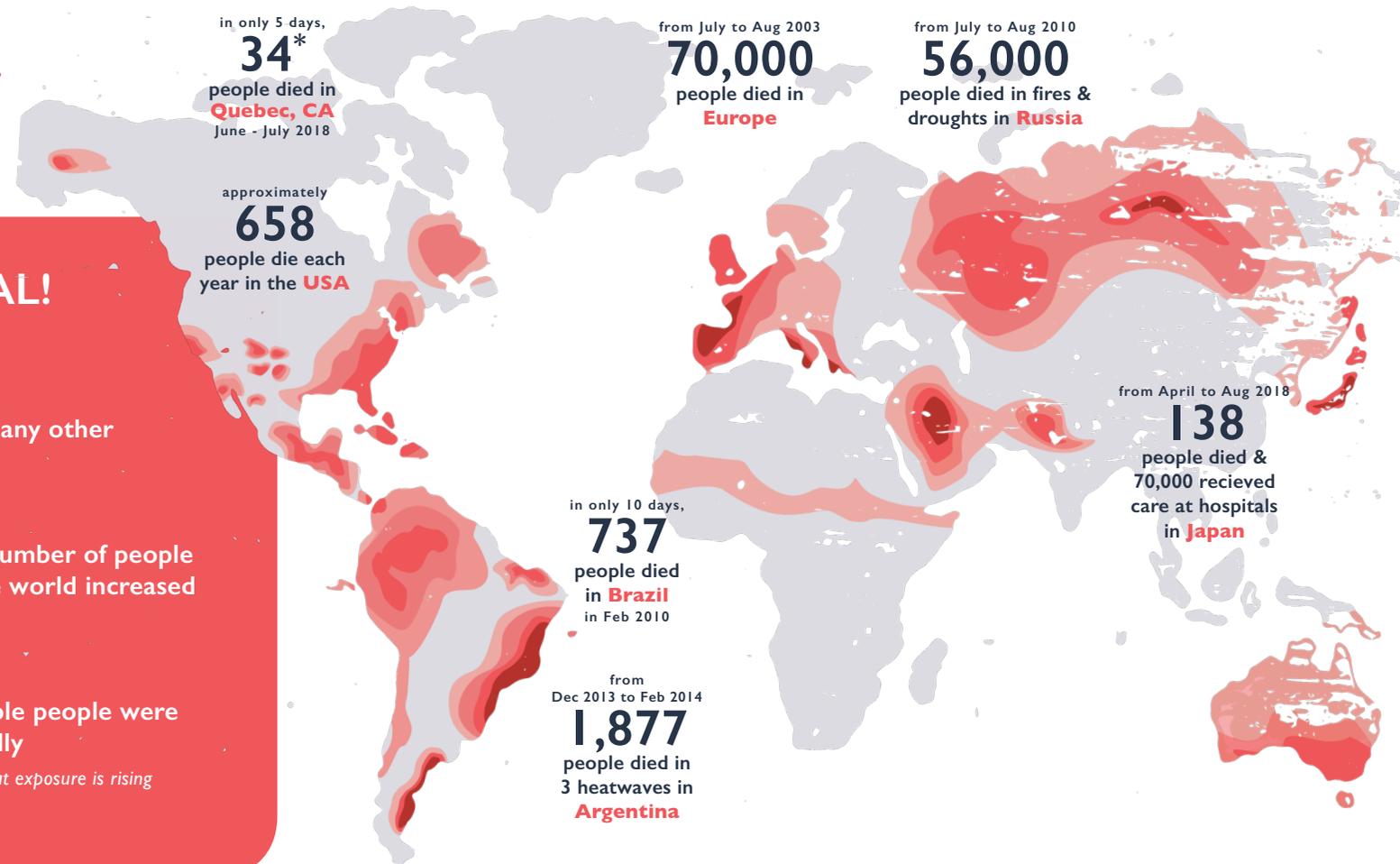
# Heat Waves

## & HEALTH

### THE THREAT IS REAL! BE PREPARED.

- Heat kills more people than any other climate-related hazard  
*NOAA, USA (avg. 2008-2017)*
- Between 2000 & 2016, the number of people exposed to heatwaves in the world increased by at least 125 million  
*WHO, 2018*
- In 2017, 157 million vulnerable people were exposed to heatwaves globally  
*Proportion of population vulnerable to heat exposure is rising globally, The Lancet 2018*

\* Excess heat-related deaths



From December 2018 to February 2019, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, & Mexico issued heatwave alerts almost concurrently, something not seen before in the Americas.

As of July 2019, heatwaves were continuing or expected to increase in North & Central America and the Caribbean.

# HEAT EXHAUSTION

## KNOW WHAT TO DO

**Heat exhaustion** is a moderate to severe stage of heat illness related to your body's efforts to reduce temperature. It occurs most frequently in healthy young people engaged in outdoor activities.

## Recognize the Symptoms

- Heavy Sweating
- Cold pale skin
- Temperature below 40°C (104°F)
- Faintness or dizziness
- Headache
- Fast breathing
- Rapid & weak pulse
- Muscle cramps



## Take Action!

- Move to a cool place
- Lie down
- Remove excess of clothing
- Apply cool wet cloths to body
- Sip water

**IF SYMPTOMS LAST MORE THAN 1 HOUR, GET MEDICAL HELP —**  
Heat exhaustion can turn into heat stroke

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# HEAT STROKE

## KNOW WHAT TO DO

**Heat stroke** is the severest form of heat illness caused by your body being unable to regulate temperature. Those with chronic health conditions are most at risk.

## Recognize the Symptoms

- Hot, dry skin
- Temperature above 40°C (104°F)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Unconsciousness or coma



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## Take Action!

- **CALL** the emergency line immediately
- Move person to a cool place
- Apply cool wet cloths to body
- **DO NOT** give anything to drink

### HEAT STROKE KILLS —

It is a serious medical emergency that requires hospital care



# PREVENT EXTREME HEAT EFFECTS

## Keep Out of the Heat

- Stay indoors during hours of extreme heat
- If you are outside, stay in the shade or a cool place
- Avoid strenuous physical activity
- Spend part of the day in a cool place (if not your home, an air-conditioned public building)

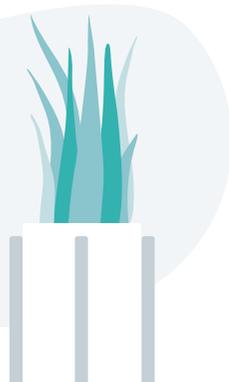
## Keep Your Home Cool

- Close window curtains/shades during the day
- Open windows at night (if it is safe & cooler outside)
- Move to the coolest room in the house, as needed
- Hang wet towels to cool the room down
- If you use air conditioning, keep doors & windows closed to conserve electricity and prevent a community wide outage

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## Keep Cool & Hydrated



- Take cool baths or use wet cloths to keep cool
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes made of breathable materials & light colors to reflect the heat
- Use light bed cloths to avoid heat accumulation
- Drink plenty of water every two hours, before getting thirsty
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine as these can cause dehydration
- Eat fruits & vegetables and avoid heavy meals

## Help Others!

- Talk with your family, friends and neighbors about what to do during a heatwave
- Elderly or sick people living alone should be checked on daily
- If a person requires medication, check with a health care professional on how exposure to extreme heat might affect them
- Don't leave kids, elders, and pets alone under the sun or in vehicles



*Tip!*

Follow warnings and watches issued by Weather Services and Health Authorities

# PREVENT EXTREME HEAT EFFECTS

## Are You More Vulnerable?

### VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS INCLUDE:

- People with acute and chronic health conditions
- Elderly (older than 65 years)
- Pregnant women
- Children
- Pets
- Athletes, outdoor workers, & the homeless

### TIPS FOR PATIENTS

- Visit your doctor for recommendations before the heatwave
- Keep your dose unless recommended by your doctor and avoid self medication
- Be aware of effects that your medicines and high temperatures may cause to your body
- Keep control of your vitals
- Drink plenty of water even if you are not thirsty, and avoid coffee, alcohol and psychoactive substances
- Stay active indoors, and remember to keep in touch with your family & friends

### Pre-existing Health Conditions

- Diabetes & other endocrine diseases
- High blood pressure & heart failure
- Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Renal failure & kidney stones
- Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, dementia, depression
- Acute diseases, e.g. diarrhea, acute respiratory illness
- Physical or cognitive disabilities
- Overweight

### Medications Affected by Heat

- Diuretics
- Anticholinergic drugs
- Sympathomimetic drugs
- Antiadrenergic drugs
- Antipsychotics
- Anticonvulsants
- Antidepressants
- Muscle relaxants
- Allergy medication
- Other drugs: antiemetics, anti-vertigo



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To learn more, visit [www.paho.org/heatwave-preparedness](http://www.paho.org/heatwave-preparedness)



STAY CONNECTED!  
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