

18 July 2022

Please share the following information, thanks:

NHS urges people to stay safe and stay well as heatwave continues

For many people seeing the sun shining is a welcome reminder that summer is here but as the heatwave continues, with record-breaking temperatures expected today and tomorrow, we are urging people across Surrey Heartlands to stay safe and stay well.

Whilst many of us enjoy the sunshine, it's important to remember that sustained periods of high temperatures - as we are experiencing now - do bring health risks, especially older people, those with certain medical conditions and babies and young children – so it's important to take steps to stay well and stay as cool as possible as the temperatures soar.

There are very simple steps people can take to stay safe and well in the heatwave:

- **Stay as cool as possible** by keeping out of the sun and wearing light clothing. If you do need to go outside, try to avoid the hottest part of the day (usually 11am-3pm)
- **Stay hydrated** by drinking plenty of water and other drinks, avoiding alcohol
- **Stay protected** by wearing UV sunglasses and a hat – and apply sunscreen with a high SPF rating and UVA protection and walk in the shade if you can
- **Check on elderly friends, relatives and neighbours** as they will be at greater risk from the heat – and take extra care with babies and young children, who are also more vulnerable to becoming unwell in the hot weather.

Dr Charlotte Canniff, Joint Chief Medical Officer for Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership explains: “It is great to see the sun shining, but as the heatwave continues we know hot weather can cause serious problems, especially for babies, young children, people with existing health conditions and older people. Very hot weather can also lead to sunstroke and dehydration - and we often see an increase in hospital admissions during heatwaves - so it's really important we all do all we can to keep ourselves, and others, safe.

“Taking a few simple precautions, like staying inside and keeping cool as cool as possible - and drinking plenty of water to stay well hydrated is easy to do and all really important for everyone.

“If you need to go out, try to avoid the hottest part of the day, stay in the shade if possible and use a high factor sunscreen so you are protected. We also know that extreme temperatures, like those we are seeing, are much more dangerous for older people, those with certain health conditions and babies and young children so it's good to check on elderly neighbours and family if you can and take extra care with little ones, who find it

more difficult to regulate their heat and can be more likely to become unwell in the hot weather.”

If people do feel unwell in the hot weather the local NHS is here for them – and there are a range of services available to help including:

- **Pharmacies** - a good place to start for health advice and over-the-counter medicines
- **GP practices** can also help if you need advice or think you may need to see a doctor
- **NHS 111 online** at www.111.nhs.uk helps link you up with the service you need (for children under 5 years please call 111 instead) – and **NHS 111 by phone** 24/7 where a health advisor can help you get the care you need in the right place
- **Walk-in centres and urgent treatment centres** can also help – see www.nhs.uk for details
- **Remember 999 and A&E are for critically ill people** so always call or go to A&E straight away if it is a life-threatening situation.

Dr Canniff added: “By using the right service you can ‘help us, help you’ and together we can keep A&E for those who are seriously unwell and urgently need the help of our frontline teams.”

When temperatures reach high levels, and become dangerous, health organisations and local authorities work together to deliver the national [Heatwave Plan for England](#). The plan sets out how partners should work together to keep local populations safe – and, as part of our wider role, we are actively working with local agencies to ensure plans are in place locally.

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