

Heatwave emergencies: practise

These activities give the children the opportunity to practise what they could do before and during a heatwave emergency to ensure they are safe throughout. We recommend that before you start these activities you go through some of the activities in the 'Coping skills' module with the children, as some knowledge on these is required in the following activities.

Activities can be worked through in order. You can do all activities, or you can pick and choose. If you are short on time, you could pick the following activities:

1. That's cool
- and
2. Heatwave preparedness role play activity **or** Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise.

Learning objectives

By the end of the 'Heatwave emergencies: practise' activities children will be able to:

- > Practise some of the most effective ways to stay safe during a heatwave, and manage potential risks.

Practise activity summary		
Time	Activity name	Supporting resources
5 minutes	That's cool	'Which of these actions is cool in a heatwave emergency?' presentation Heatwave checklist
20 minutes	Heatwave preparedness role play activity	Heatwave preparedness role play activity Heatwave factsheet for teachers Heatwave checklist
20 minutes	Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise	Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet Heatwave factsheet for teachers Heatwave checklist

1. That's cool

Activity type	Suggested time	Suggested group size
 Practise	 5 minutes	 Whole group
What you need 1. ‘Which of these actions is cool in a heatwave emergency?’ presentation 2. Heatwave checklist	Introduction This activity helps consolidate the children’s knowledge on what they should or should not do during a heatwave emergency. This is based on the ‘Heatwave checklist’ resource. Activity description Before the activity: 1. Show the ‘Which of these actions is cool in a heatwave emergency?’ presentation. 2. Print out a copy of the ‘Which of these actions is cool in a heatwave emergency?’ presentation with notes and follow the instructions below. 3. Print out a copy of the ‘Heatwave checklist’ for your reference. Explain that: > We are going to do an activity called ‘That’s cool’ to develop our knowledge of what we should or should not do during a heatwave emergency. > Firstly, listen to the description of an action someone might take during a heatwave emergency. Then if the action is safe, give a thumbs up and say “That’s cool!” If the action is unsafe, give a thumbs down and say “No way!” Work through each slide, calling out each action description and helping children come to the right conclusion. A thumbs up or down will appear on the slide to show the correct answer. You can find more detail on the answers in the notes section of the presentation.	

2. Heatwave preparedness role play activity

Activity type	Suggested time	Suggested group size
 Practise	 20 minutes	 Pairs
What you need Heatwave preparedness role play activity Heatwave checklist Heatwave factsheet for teachers	Introduction This activity gives children the opportunity to practise what they might do in a heatwave emergency situation using role play scenario cards. Activity description Before the activity: - Print and cut out the two scenario cards from the 'Heatwave preparedness role play activity'. You will need a copy of one of the scenario cards for each pair of pupils. - Print out a copy of the 'Heatwave checklist' and the 'Heatwave factsheet for teachers' for your reference. Divide the children into pairs and give each pair one of the scenario cards. Explain that: > An important part of being prepared for an emergency is to practise what you could do in an emergency situation. > In your pairs use the scenario card to create a short role play about how you could respond to the situation. Think about what you have learnt around the ways to stay safe and cope during a heatwave. > Before you start creating your role plays, let's read through both scenarios together. Read through both scenarios with the class. If children need some ideas, you could refer to the 'Heatwave checklist' and the 'Heatwave factsheet for teachers'. If time permits, ask some pairs to perform their scenes to the rest of the group. Then lead a whole group discussion to decide on the best way to handle the two different scenarios.	

3. Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise

Activity type	Suggested time	Suggested group size
 Practise	 20 minutes	 Small groups
What you need 1. Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet 2. Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet 3. Heatwave checklist 4. Heatwave factsheet for teachers	Introduction This scenario-based exercise helps children explore how they might respond to a developing heatwave emergency. Activity description Before the activity: 1. Print out copies of the 'Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet' - cut out the boxes on this sheet – enough for one set per small group. 2. Print out the 'Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet', enough copies for one per small group. 3. Print out a copy of the 'Heatwave factsheet for teachers' and the 'Heatwave checklist' for your reference. You may also wish to give copies of the factsheet to the children so they can refer to it throughout this activity. Ask the children to get into small groups and give each group a 'Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet.' Explain that: > An important part of being prepared for an emergency is to practise what you would do in an emergency situation. > In a moment each group will be given a scenario. We will read it through together and then in your groups, you will discuss and write down any actions you might take to respond safely to the situation. Read the initial scenario through with the children. > You have three minutes to note down on the answer sheet all the things you might need to do right now to make sure you and your family are safe. When you hear "Stop", we are going to stop discussing the scenario as groups and share some of the actions you might take with the whole class. If the children need suggestions, refer them to the 'Heatwave checklist' or the 'Heatwave factsheet for teachers'. Call out "Stop" when three minutes is up and ask each group to share some actions. Use the suggested answers in the 'Heatwave preparedness activity scenario exercise instruction sheet' to help children develop their answers. Continue the activity by handing each group the 'Scenario development one' cut-out and read this through with them. Then explain that:	

- > You have another three minutes to note down on the answer sheet all the things you might need to do right now to make sure you and your family are safe. Once again, when you hear “Stop”, we are going to stop discussing the scenario as groups and share some of the actions you might take with the whole class.

Call out “Stop” when three minutes is up and ask each group to share some actions. Use the suggested answers in the ‘Heatwave preparedness activity scenario exercise instruction sheet’ to help develop children’s answers and knowledge.

Continue the activity by handing out a ‘Scenario development two’ cut-out to each group, giving the children three minutes to discuss it, and then opening up the discussion with the class.

Summarise their preparedness learning at the end of the activity.

Heatwave factsheet for teachers

What are heatwaves?

- > A heatwave is a period of unusually hot weather that is most common in summer. In the UK, a heatwave generally occurs when the temperature exceeds 30°C during the day and 15°C at night on at least two successive days. These high temperatures could have a significant effect on people's health, so it is important to listen out for weather updates in case a heatwave alert is issued.
- > Heat can affect anyone, but some people are at greater risk of serious harm than others. These include: babies and young children, older people and people with long-term health conditions, particularly breathing or heart-related problems.

What are the health risks during a heatwave?

Health risk	Symptoms	Treatment
Dehydration: when your body loses more water than it takes in, often as a result of sweating in hot weather.	> dry mouth > dizziness > headache > dark urine	Drink plenty of water.
Heat exhaustion: caused by excessive sweating resulting in a loss of body fluids and salts.	> feeling sick, faint, dizzy or confused > headache > heavy sweating > stomach, leg or arm cramps	Cool the person down – move the person to a cool shady area to rest and give them water to drink. Seek medical advice.
Heatstroke: when the body temperature becomes dangerously high and the body is unable to cool itself, due to illness or prolonged exposure to heat.	> high body temperatures (over 40°C) > flushed and very hot skin > confusion and restlessness > headaches and hallucinations	Call 999 and ask for an ambulance. Cool the person – while waiting for help to arrive, move the person to a cool area, remove outer clothing and cover them with a cold wet sheet.
Sunburn: skin damage caused by too much sun exposure.	> red and painful skin (These symptoms can take up to five hours to appear.)	Move the person out of the sun and encourage them to drink sips of cold water. Cool the affected skin with cold water. Calamine or aftersun lotion may soothe the skin.
Hay fever: allergic reaction caused by high pollen levels. Warm, sunny weather can increase pollen levels in the air, so it is important to watch the estimated pollen levels in the weather forecast.	> sneezing > itchy eyes > runny nose	Most symptoms can be treated with medicines called antihistamines which help relieve the symptoms of allergies.

Staying safe

Preparing for a heatwave:

- > Listen carefully for updates on the weather forecast.
- > Plan ahead to reduce the risk of ill health from the heat (e.g. stock up on high-protection suncreams).
- > Make sure you have plenty of bottled water somewhere handy in case of drought or local problems with the water supply.
- > Make sure people you know who may be particularly vulnerable in a heatwave (e.g. grandparents, older neighbours, etc.) are aware of the heatwave and know what to do to stay safe and look after themselves.
- > Ensure you have your medication in stock if you suffer from hay fever.
- > If you have asthma, make sure you have your inhaler(s) with you wherever you go as hot weather could trigger this.

During a heatwave:

- > Stay inside, in the coolest room in your home, as much as possible. On very hot days, you may find splashing yourself with cool water helps keep you cool. If you go out, stay in the shade, apply suncream and wear a hat. Keep out of the heat as much as possible and avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.).
- > Keep your home as cool as possible – shading windows and shutting them during the day may help. Open them when it is cooler at night.
- > Avoid too much physical activity – this can cause you to dehydrate (lose water) and can bring on some ill-health effects such as dry mouth, dizziness and headaches.
- > Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes – preferably cotton or linen as they are natural fabrics that will allow your skin to breathe.
- > Contact your doctor, a pharmacist or the NHS if you are worried about your own or someone else's health during a heatwave, especially if you are taking medication, feel unwell or have any unusual symptoms. If you suspect heatstroke, call 999.
- > Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals. Try to not eat too much salty food. Drink plenty of water regularly, even if you don't feel particularly thirsty.
- > Help look out for others in your community – visit or phone people who are less able to look after themselves, such as older neighbours, relatives and friends, and people with health conditions or mobility problems.

Find out more:

NHS Heatwave pages: [nhs.uk/Livewell/Summerhealth/Pages/Heatwave.aspx](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Summerhealth/Pages/Heatwave.aspx)

Met Office Heat Health Watch: [metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/heat-health/#?tab=heatHealth](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/heat-health/#?tab=heatHealth)

Public Health England's Heatwave Plan: [gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england)

Heatwave checklist

Heatwaves are most common in summer and can have some significant impacts on people's health. Share this checklist with your parents/guardians to help the family stay safe throughout a heatwave emergency.

Before a heatwave:

- ☐ Listen carefully for updates on the weather.
- ☐ Plan ahead to reduce the risk of ill health from the heat (e.g. stock up on high-protection suncreams).
- ☐ Make sure you have plenty of bottled water somewhere handy in case of drought or local problems with the water supply.
- ☐ Make sure people you know who may be particularly vulnerable in a heatwave (e.g. grandparents, older neighbours, etc.) are aware of the heatwave and know what to do to stay safe and look after themselves.
- ☐ Ensure you have your medication in stock if you suffer from hay fever.
- ☐ If you have asthma, make sure you have your inhaler(s) with you wherever you go

During a heatwave:

- ☐ Stay inside and in the coolest room in your home as much as possible. On very hot days, you may find splashing yourself with cool water helps keep you cool. If you go out, stay in the shade, apply suncream and wear a hat. Keep out of the heat as much as possible and avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.).
- ☐ Keep your home as cool as possible – shading windows and shutting them during the day may help.
- ☐ Open the windows when it is cooler at night.
- ☐ Avoid too much physical activity – this can cause you to dehydrate (lose water) and can bring on some ill-health effects such as dry mouth, dizziness and headaches.
- ☐ Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes – preferably cotton or linen as they are natural fabrics that will allow your skin to breathe.
- ☐ Contact your doctor, a pharmacist or the NHS if you are worried about your own or someone else's health during a heatwave, especially if you are taking medication, feel unwell or have any unusual symptoms. If you suspect heatstroke, call 999.
- ☐ Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals. Try to not eat too much salty food. Drink plenty of water regularly, even if you don't feel particularly thirsty.
- ☐ Help look out for others in your community – visit or phone people who are less able to look after themselves, such as older neighbours, relatives and friends, and people with health conditions or mobility problems.

Heatwave preparedness role play activity

Scenario A: Warm warning

It has been slowly getting warmer over the last few days and you have been enjoying the warm weather. However, it is now getting a bit too hot for comfort. The newsreader on TV has just announced that there is a heatwave alert in place and the temperature is forecasted to be over 30°C for the next couple of days. Your older neighbour is worried about what might happen during the heatwave.

What can you do to help them prepare? What information can you share with those around you about how to stay safe in a heatwave?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after the role-play performances, if not already covered):

- > Teaching your neighbour some facts about heatwaves so they know what to look out for.
- > Teaching them some coping skills to help them stay calm.
- > Helping them prepare their home for the heatwave by having plenty of drinking water available, as well as taking steps to keep their home as cool as possible – shading windows and shutting them during the day and opening them when it is cooler at night.
- > Checking on your neighbour regularly to see if they are coping and if they need anything.
- > Discussing your plans with your family and make sure they know where you are when you are checking on your neighbour.

Scenario B: Heat and health

It is the weekend, and a very hot day. Your family have suggested spending the day outside, taking a picnic with you so that you can make the most of the warm weather. However, your cousin is worried about some of the effects, such as heat exhaustion or sunburn. Luckily, you learnt a lot about heatwave preparedness from a school project.

What can you share with your cousin about how to stay safe and be prepared during a heatwave? What facts do you know about heatwaves? What could you teach your cousin to help them stay calm and cope with thoughts and feelings about what might happen during a heatwave?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after the role-play performances, if not already covered):

- > Teaching your cousin some facts about heatwaves to help them prepare.
- > Staying out of direct sunlight between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. (the hottest hours of the day).
- > Wearing high-factor sunscreen to protect your skin, covering up with a hat and loose, light-coloured clothing.
- > Drinking cold drinks regularly and not doing too much physical activity.
- > Practising a coping skill you have learnt about in the Pillowcase Project, such as 'Breathing with colour' or 'My favourite place' or 'Guided Imagery'.
- > Listening to adults for other ways to help each other feel safe.

Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise instruction sheet

Initial scenario

It is the summer holidays and you and your family are getting ready to go out for the day to a local park. The weather forecaster warns that temperatures are expected to rise above 30°C and warns of a potential heatwave for several days.

What do you do now? How does this affect your plan for the day?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > Make sure all your family apply suncream before you leave the house and then take lots with you so that you can reapply throughout the day.
- > Make sure you pack plenty of water and fluids to take with you.
- > Wear a hat and some light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes so you can stay cool.
- > If you have hay fever, make sure you have some medication with you.

Scenario development one

You get to the park and it is really busy. You and your family are trying to decide where to sit. Your little sister wants to sit in the sunshine next to the play area.

What should you advise your family to do?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > You should sit in the shade so that you keep out of the sun as much as possible.
- > You should all put on your sun hats, especially if going into the sun.
- > You and your little sister should avoid running around too much and you should keep drinking plenty of water to stay cool and hydrated.
- > Make sure the whole family keeps re-applying suncream to ensure they do not get sunburnt.

3. Scenario development two

Your little sister has spent lots of time playing on the sunny play area. She comes back over to you looking very hot and sweaty. She complains to your mum that she has a headache and feels a bit dizzy and sick.

What could you do now?

Suggested answers (you can use these as part of the discussion after each group has listed the actions they would do, if not already mentioned):

- > Tell your sister to come and sit down in the shade for a while.
- > Make sure she drinks plenty of cold fluids.
- > She could pour some water over her head or skin to cool her down.
- > Do some of the coping skills exercises you learnt in the Pillowcase Project with your sister to calm her down: a breathing or visualisation exercise.
- > If she gets sicker, urge your parents to seek medical advice.

Heatwave preparedness scenario exercise answer sheet

Initial scenario

It is the summer holidays and you and your family are getting ready to go out for the day to a local park. The weather forecaster warns that temperatures are expected to rise above 30°C and warns of a potential heatwave for several days.

What do you do now? How does this affect your plan for the day?

Scenario development one

Scenario development two

Well done for knowing what to do to stay safe!