



Beat the heat: keep cool at home checklist

Homes can sometimes overheat during warmer weather, and occasionally in cooler months also. Even during a relatively cool summer 1 in 5 homes are likely to overheat. For many people, this makes life uncomfortable and sleeping difficult. Some people are particularly vulnerable to heat and for them a hot home can worsen existing health conditions or even kill.

The first part of this checklist helps you to identify if a home may be at risk of overheating and if occupants there may be at risk of ill health from overheating. The more factors that are present, the greater the risk is likely to be. The second part details how to reduce overheating and where to get help.

Types of homes that are more prone to overheating

Flats on the top floor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flats with opening windows on just one side	<input type="checkbox"/>
Little shading (external or internal)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large unshaded east, west or south facing windows	<input type="checkbox"/>
Located in a densely built-up urban area with little green space nearby	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modern, very airtight, highly insulated or energy efficient Note Making homes energy efficient has lots of health and other benefits, but care also needs to be taken to avoid overheating in summer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poorly insulated heating or hot water system	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restricted opening of windows (for example, safety catch installed or unable to open them due to noise, pollution or fear of crime)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anyone living here who may be at higher risk of ill health from overheating?

Older, especially over 75 years of age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children, especially under 4 years of age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Live alone and/or socially isolated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-term health condition (particularly heart and breathing problems)	<input type="checkbox"/>
On multiple medications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduced mobility and/or ability to look after themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulty adapting their behaviour in warmer weather (for example, due to dementia or alcohol/drug misuse issues)	<input type="checkbox"/>
At home during the hottest part of the day (for example, small children or home workers)	<input type="checkbox"/>

What you could do now, before hot weather

- shade or cover windows exposed to direct sunlight. External shutters or shades are very effective, internal blinds or curtains are less effective but cheaper and easier to install
- check that windows or vents can be opened
- check that the central heating system can be turned off
- if applicable, check mechanical ventilations systems are switched on and operating in summer mode
- grow plants inside and outside to provide shade and help cool the air
- check that fridges, freezers and fans are working properly
- check medicines can be stored according to the instructions on the packaging
- find out if you are eligible for a home hazard assessment (see the list below)
- If insulating or refurbishing your home, ask for advice about reducing overheating
- consider overheating risk if buying or renting, particularly for vulnerable people

Take action in hot weather

- shade or cover windows exposed to direct sunlight, external shutters or shades are very effective, while internal blinds or curtains are less effective but cheaper and easier to install
- take a break from the heat by moving to a cooler part of the house (especially for sleeping)
- remember that it may be cooler outside in the shade or in a public building (such as places of worship, local libraries or supermarkets); consider a visit as a way of cooling down
- open windows (when it is safe to do so) when the air feels cooler outside than inside, for example, at night. Try to get air flowing through the home
- check that central heating is turned off
- turn off lights and electrical equipment that isn't in use
- for more information on how to stay safe in hot weather, call NHS 111 or visit NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/heatwave>

Where to get help

The most appropriate advice and support depend on the type of home (owner occupied, private rental or social housing), individual circumstances and the services available locally. A formal home hazard assessment can be effective but should be provided by a local authority or an approved local provider.

	Type of housing		
	Owner occupied	Rented	Social housing
Local council housing, environmental health, social care	✓	✓	✓
Accredited home improvement agency or handyperson service through First Stop Care Advice (0800 377 7070) for elderly people or http://www.findmyhia.org.uk/ (0300 124 0315)	✓	✓	✓
Social lettings agency		✓	✓
Social housing provider			✓
Private landlord, or if that fails, Citizen's Advice Bureau		✓	

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