


Medications and Heat


Some drugs and medications make it difficult for your body to adapt to hot temperatures

- Before the onset of warmer weather, ask your doctor, pharmacist or nurse if your medications may increase your sensitivity to heat.
- Stay in contact daily with family, neighbours or friends, during hot weather, especially if you live alone. Make sure they know you are taking a drug that makes you more sensitive to heat and let them know immediately if you are not feeling well.
- Do not stop taking any medications unless directed to do so by your doctor.



Some medications impair the body's ability to cool itself.
For example:

- Beta blockers** (e.g. metoprolol or bisoprolol), which are medications used for certain heart conditions and for treating high blood pressure.
- Antihistamines**, including over-the-counter cold or allergy medications (e.g. diphenhydramine or Benadryl®), off-the-shelf sleeping pills (e.g. Nytol®).
- Medications with anticholinergic effects, including **urinary incontinence medications** (e.g. oxybutynin), medications for Parkinson's disease (e.g. benzotropine) and **some antidepressants** (e.g. amitriptyline or nortriptyline)




Some medications can dehydrate you.
For example:

- Diuretics** (e.g. hydrochlorothiazide or furosemide), **laxatives** (e.g. Senokot®) or some **diabetes medications** (e.g. Invokana® or Jardiance®), increase the elimination of bodily fluids through urine or stool.
- Some **antidepressants** (e.g. fluoxetine, lithium or venlafaxine) cause excessive sweating, which can lead to dehydration.




Some medications can increase your body temperature.
For example:

- Antipsychotic medications** (e.g. risperidone, olanzapine or quetiapine)
- Stimulant medications** for attention disorders, such as amphetamines (e.g. Dexedrine® or Adderall®)



Some medications cause low blood pressure that heat and hot temperatures can worsen.
For example:

- Medications for heart disease** (e.g. nitroglycerin and calcium channel blockers)
- Medications for high blood pressure** (e.g. ACE inhibitors)



The effects of some medications can be affected by dehydration.
For example:

- Digoxin
- Lithium
- Warfarin
- Antiepileptics (e.g. phenytoin)

NOTE: The relationship between taking medication and negative health impacts during hot weather is not straightforward. Heat illness may occur in anyone, not only those taking these medications. Heat illness can be fatal and urgent medical attention may be needed.

To learn more about heat illness and how to manage during hot weather please see:

[HealthLinkBC Heat-related Illness](#)

[HealthLinkBC Beat the Heat](#)

[Prepared BC Extreme Heat Preparedness Guide](#)



IMPORTANT REMINDER:
Never modify how you take your medication unless advised to by your doctor.



Ministry of Health