



Heat alert guidelines for child care centres

Fact sheet

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services issues a Heat Alert when one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The forecast is showing a humidex advising of 40° celsius or higher.
- The humidex is forecast to rise to 36° celsius or higher, combined with an Environment Canada Smog Alert.
- Environment Canada issues a humidex warning for outdoor activity for people in the Oxford County area.
- High temperatures without a humidex reading equal 38° celsius or above.

Recommendations

Establish both a policy and plan to deal with extreme temperatures.

Staff should be aware of signs and symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Follow first aid procedures promptly.

Staff should role model appropriate sun safety behaviours for children.

Ensure indoor temperatures are comfortable; offer regularly scheduled rest periods.

Limit time in the sun when UV Index (ultraviolet ray strength) is most intense, between 11 am – 4 pm.

Sunscreens/insect repellent are not recommended for infants under six months of age. Keep babies under 1 year of age out of direct sunlight.

Ensure all children wear a wide brimmed hat (or with back flap), UV protective sunglasses, light and loose fitting clothing.

Apply sunscreen SPF 15 (or higher) 20-30 minutes before going outside to ensure absorption.

When using DEET insect repellent, apply 20-30 minutes after sunscreen has been applied.

Check regularly on infants and young children; ensure children are well hydrated (plain water is the liquid of choice; diluted fruit juice is acceptable).

NEVER leave children or pets in a closed parked vehicle.

Monitor children in wheelchairs in regards to the equipment metal, vinyl and heat.

Check heat of metal slides, monkey bars etc. in playground areas.

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services
410 Buller St., Woodstock, ON N4S 4N2
519-539-9800 or 1-800-755-0394

Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services recommends that childcare providers recognize the signs of heat-related illness, and follow first aid treatments:

SIGNS OF HEAT ILLNESS	TREATMENT
<p>Sunburn: redness, pain, swelling of skin, blisters, fever and headaches.</p> <p>Heat Cramps: painful muscle spasms usually in the legs but possible in abdomen; heavy sweating.</p> <p>Heat Exhaustion: heavy sweating, weakness, cold, pale and clammy skin; weak pulse, fainting and vomiting, core temperature usually 38.8° Celsius or higher, but normal temperature is possible.</p> <p>Heatstroke: a severe medical emergency, high body temperature (41° Celsius or higher), hot, dry skin, rapid and strong pulse, possible unconsciousness.</p>	<p>What to do: leave water blisters intact to speed healing and avoid infection, if breaking of blister occurs, apply dry sterile dressing. Serious cases should be seen by a physician.</p> <p>What to do: apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasm; give sips of water, if nausea occurs discontinue sips of water, move person to a cooler place to rest in a comfortable position. Observe the person carefully for changes in condition.</p> <p>What to do: get person out of sun, move person to a cooler environment, lay person down and loosen clothing, apply cool wet cloths, give sips of water, if nausea occurs, discontinue sips of water; if vomiting continues, seek immediate medical attention.</p> <p>What to do: Call 911. Do not give fluids If unable to get person to medical help immediately, do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move person to a cooler environment • Remove outer clothing • Reduce body temperature using lukewarm (not cold) water to bathe/sponge the person

For more information about how to recognize and prevent heat-related illness, please call Oxford County Public Health at: 519-539-9800.