Heatwave

* Queensland is renowned for its hot summers, but while you’re soaking up the sun it’s important to be aware of heat-related risks.
* Heatwaves are the deadliest natural hazard in Queensland, leading to the loss of more than 100 lives every year.
* Queensland is experiencing an increase in the frequency and duration of heat waves, which is why you need to understand how to stay safe during these conditions.

**Understand your risk**

* Heat waves can impact anyone, but there are members in our community who are particularly vulnerable including:
  + babies and young people
  + elderly
  + people with medical conditions such as asthma
  + pets, and
  + people who work outdoors.
* If you are in one of these vulnerable categories, or care for someone who is, it is important to follow a few simple steps to reduce your risk to stay cool and hydrated during heat waves.

**Heat-related illness**

* Heat-related illness occurs when the body absorbs too much heat. This may happen slowly over a day or two of very hot weather.
* It’s important to act quickly to avoid serious or even fatal effects of fully developed heat stroke.
* Early signs of heat stress include:
  + rising body temperature
  + dry mouth and eyes
  + headache
  + shortness of breath
  + vomiting
  + absence of tears when crying.

**Ways to reduce the impact of heatwave**

**Be prepared**

* If you have a medical condition, talk to your doctor for advice on how to manage heat.
* Think of ways to make your home cooler like installing air condition, ceiling fans, awnings, and internal blinds or curtains.

**Stay cool**

* If your area is impacted by heatwave, find ways to keep as cool as possible including:
  + drinking two to three litres of water throughout the day, even if you don’t feel thirsty;
  + limit intake of alcohol, soft drinks, tea, and coffee;
  + try to eat cold foods like fruit and salads and avoid heavy protein foods;
  + stay inside in the coolest room in your house and close windows and blinds to block out the sun; and
  + use fans and air-conditioners at home or visit a family member, friend, or neighbour who has air-conditioning.
* Never leave children, adults or animals in a car.
* Avoid going outside between 11am and 3pm, and wear protective clothing and reapply sunscreen regularly.

**Look after your animals**

* Animals can also be affected by heat-related illness. If you’re in charge of an animal, you have a duty of care to provide it with food, water, and appropriate shelter.

**Talk to your doctor about ways you can manage the risk of heatwave or call 13 HEALTH for advice.**