

## Summer heat waves can turn common medications deadly

Heat waves [kill more people](#) than any other single weather event, making them dangerous by themselves. But if you are among the millions of Americans taking certain medications, you may be facing an additional risk. Some drugs, taken when it's hot, can provoke serious, sometimes life-threatening reactions.

These include drugs widely used for many common conditions, including blood pressure, asthma, depression and allergies, among others. When the temperature rises, they can impair the body's ability to cope with heat.

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"Heat waves are getting worse with climate change," [pediatrician Aaron] Bernstein says. "We need to be mindful when medications mix with heat. Too much heat can make an otherwise safe and effective drug dangerous."

Some medicines, such as diuretics, make our bodies lose water, which can result in dehydration when it's hot outside. Others — such as beta blockers or ACE inhibitors — lower blood pressure, which makes fainting more likely in the heat. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors — commonly prescribed antidepressants like Prozac — can make us sweat more, also causing dehydration.

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Consumers can protect themselves by taking the same precautions as those recommended generally to prevent heat sickness. These include monitoring weather forecasts and — if you exercise outside — go out early in the morning or evening.

"If you have to be outside in the middle of the day, try to stay in shade and drink fluids," Bernstein says.

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