

# Medications can increase risk of heat-related illness

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(HealthDay)—Commonly used medications may increase the risk of dehydration and heat-related illness during hot weather, according to an article published online June 13 in the *Journal of Clinical Pharmacy and Therapeutics*.

Noting that hot days are often associated with increased morbidity and mortality, Kerrie Westaway, Ph.D., from the Sansom Institute in Adelaide, Australia, and colleagues examined the correlation between medications and thermoregulation.

The researchers note that medications may increase the risk of dehydration and heat-related illness, especially in older adults taking multiple medications. Medications that are associated with increased risk of heat-related illness include antidepressants, anticonvulsants, antipsychotics, medicines with [anticholinergic effects](#), diuretics, and

benzodiazepines and opioids. Mechanisms by which medications may increase risk include diuresis and electrolyte imbalance; sedation and cognitive impairment; altered thermoregulation; decreased thirst recognition; decreased sweat production; and hypotension and reduced cardiac output.

"Commonly used medicines that may significantly increase the risk include diuretics, especially when combined with an angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitor or an angiotensin II receptor blocker, anticholinergics, and psychotropics," the authors write. "Initiation of individualized preventive measures prior to the start of the [hot weather](#) season, which includes a review of the patient and their medicines to identify thermoregulatory issues, may reduce the risk of heat-related illness or death."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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