

The heat is on – how to survive a long, hot El Niño summer

December 14 2015, by Niki Widdowson

Keep an eye on children's water intake, carry a water bottle wherever you go and avoid travel in the hottest part of the day – that's the advice of QUT health statistician Associate Professor Adrian Barnett as we move into an El Niño weather pattern predicted to be the strongest yet.

El Niño weather brings hot dry conditions.

Professor Barnett, from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) said there are often spikes of emergency hospital admissions during times of [high temperatures](#).

"Existing heart conditions are exacerbated by heat as the body has to work harder to keep cool; and we see a rise in emergency hospital admission for renal problems in adults and in children – a sign of under hydration," Professor Barnett.

"Check on your older relatives, friends or neighbours as these conditions can come on quite quickly as people may not realise they are dehydrated or over stressing their heart.

"Signs of dehydration include headaches, feeling dizzy, and slurred speech – that's the real warning sign that you have to slow down, get out of the heat and [drink water](#).

"The best way to help your body cope and reduce the burden on it is to think ahead and plan trips for the cool part of the day. Getting stuck in a

traffic jam going up the coast in the middle of the day is not good for your hydration, or your temper.

"Don't stop exercising, just do it early in the morning or in the evening. Avoiding alcohol is hard at this time of year, but alcohol is a great dehydrator so match a drink with a glass of water.

"And of course, there's always a cold shower to cool you down or the swimming pool."

Professor Barnett also said food poisoning increased in the hot months.

"This means more care must be taken with food preparation and storage, as nobody wants Salmonella for Christmas."

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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