

Summer's heat can damage your medicines: Keep them safe, says physician

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As scorching temperatures continue to plague the United States this summer, millions of Americans are at risk for dehydration and heat-linked illness.

But what about their medications? Can rising temperatures render those useless and leave patients vulnerable?

Yes they can, so it's important to understand the effects of [heat](#) and humidity on certain drugs, said Dr. Mike Ren, a [primary care physician](#) and associate professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"You don't want your medications failing on you or for their potency to decrease," he added in a Baylor news release.

"Aerosolized medications, like inhalers and other medications you breathe in, can be damaged," Ren explained. "Heat can cause liquid or injectable medications to dry up, making them hard or causing them to evaporate so that they cannot function the way they were intended."

Even pills such as thyroid medications or [birth control pills](#) might look fine after being in the heat, the critical molecules inside can be degraded. Meanwhile, liquid versions of pills can melt in the heat or become gummy.

If you worried that your medication isn't working after being in the heat, contact your pharmacy or your physician, Ren advised.

What can you do to avoid the problem in the first place?

To safely store medications, Ren suggested:

- Remove your medications from [direct sunlight](#).
- Keep your medications at room temperature, in a cupboard, nightstand or in a cool, dry environment.

- Never leave medications unattended in a vehicle.

More information: The National Weather Service has more on [extreme heat and medicines](#).

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