

# EXCESSIVE HEAT & PREGNANCY

Taking care of yourself is the *first step* to caring for your baby.

## WHY PROTECT YOURSELF FROM EXTREME HEAT?



Pregnant people are **more vulnerable to heat illness**.

Exposure to excessive heat can reduce the blood flow in your uterus and the amount of nutrients and oxygen your baby receives through the placenta. **Your baby needs lots of oxygen and nutrition to develop** and have an **optimal birth weight**.

In extreme heat it is easy to get dehydrated. Constant dehydration during pregnancy may trigger **complications that can lead to premature birth**.



## WHY ARE BLACK WOMEN AND BABIES AT THE HIGHEST RISK DURING HOT WEATHER?

Black women are more likely to live in homes that are :

- located in unfinished neighborhoods
- does not have central air-conditioning
- in "heat-islands" which are spaces with less green space and more asphalt

## WHAT IS PRETERM BIRTH/DELIVERY?

- **Preterm birth** is when a baby is **born early**--37 weeks or sooner
- Babies born too early and babies with low birth weights are more likely to die in their first year of life
- In Fresno, Native American and Black women **experience the highest** rates of preterm birth, low birth weight babies, and infant mortality

## TIPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND BABY:

- Remember to **drink at least 8 to 12 cups** of **water** every **day**. Try to drink **2-3 cups** of water **per hour**, or more if you are sweating heavily.
- **Limit outdoor activities** to when it is the coolest (morning and evening)
- **Check your local news for extreme heat alerts** and know where the nearest **cooling shelter** is in your area
- Keep your **blinds or curtains closed**. This helps decrease the heat entering through windows
- If possible, **dry clothes outside** instead of using dryer or hanging clothes inside

**Learn more:** [bit.ly/3AHpAkF](https://bit.ly/3AHpAkF)

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- **Dress in light-colored and loose** fitting clothing made of cotton



- **Use a microwave or toaster oven** to prepare meals instead of a traditional oven



- **Wet a clean cloth and freeze it** to use as a cooling compress



- Set your **ceiling fan counterclockwise** at high speed



- **Unplug** gadgets and small appliances
- Try to stay **inside** an air-conditioned place



- **Incandescent bulbs** waste 90% of their energy as heat. Replace those with fluorescent or LED bulbs