

Top tips for hot weather

Guidance for staff working in kitchens

Catering staff, working in a hot kitchen environment, are more likely to be at risk in a heatwave and should therefore be aware that they need to drink more than usual:

- Keep consuming fluids (water, fruit juice, ice lollies, jellies etc.) to avoid dehydration
- Staff should not wait until they are thirsty, they should drink little and often and try to avoid alcohol, tea and coffee. (Drinks that contain caffeine, cause the body to lose fluid which increases the risk of heat related illness)
- Serve/prepare/consume cold foods and foods that have a high water content including vegetables, salads and summer fruits, jellies, ice creams, sorbets, yoghurts etc.

In addition to this general guidance staff should:

- Not turn on ovens (or other equipment that produces heat) until necessary
- Ensure refrigeration equipment is operating correctly, serviced and maintained in optimum working condition
- Unlike other rooms, keep cooking areas as cool as possible by opening windows (remembering fly screens) using cooling fans and local exhaust ventilation in the hottest places. Ensure equipment is operating safely and correctly. NB Placing an ice pack (cooler block) from your freezer, safely in a fan's air flow, can help to cool the circulating air
- Not remove protective clothing (such as hair nets, gloves, mitts and protective footwear)
This will be counterproductive and increase risk of injury
- Wear cool, breathable clothing like cotton (relaxing uniform protocols if necessary)
- Take a break where possible and get out of the kitchen to allow body to cool down
- Review menus and provide more cold options where possible

Staff should seek advice from their doctor, chemist or www.nhs.uk if they have any concerns or are worried about their health - especially, if they are taking medication, feel unwell or have any unusual symptoms such as dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps etc.

