# **As Kolkata scorches in the sun, doctors advice on how to be safe**

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Kolkata and many other parts of the country grapple with frequent heatwaves. Doctors share measures to stay safe this summer.

**Avoid outdoor physical activities that can cause exertion, say experts:**

Doctors suggest that it is important to plan your outdoor visits ahead to avoid [heat](https://m.timesofindia.com/topic/heat) exhaustion. “With temperatures at 36 to 38 degrees, we are in the midst of a heatwave. Do not go outdoors unnecessarily between 11am to 5pm. All outdoor activities that can cause exertion should be avoided because it will lead to excessive sweating which will cause dehydration,” advised doctor [Dr. Sushila Kataria](https://m.timesofindia.com/topic/Dr-Sushila-Kataria).

Sharing similar opinion, Dr Sabyasachi Sen, Critical Care Physician, from Belle Vue Kolkata, said, “Try and avoid direct exposure to sun rays as much as possible. Carrying an umbrella is a must now. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from harmful sun rays. If you feel you are sweating too much when you are out, take shelter and rest for some time. Drinking two to three litres of water is a must now. But don’t drink more than four to five litres of water as that might cause other health-related issues. Consult your dermatologist and use good quality sunscreen to protect your skin from sun rays. Do take your bath three to four times a day. “Take a few minutes’ rest after coming from the heat before you take your bath or enter an air-conditioned room. Avoid outdoor activities as much as possible. Eat light food and reduce your intake of animal proteins. Instead, eat seasonal fruits and vegetables,” Dr Sabyasachi Sen added.

**Wear light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes:**

In terms of clothing, doctors suggest that people should be opting for loose-fitting, light-coloured clothes during this time. “Wear light, loose-fitting, airy, light-coloured clothing as tight clothes trap heat,” said Dr Vineeta Singh Tandon, Consultant, Internal Medicine, PSRI Hospital.

“Carry an umbrella and water mixed with an electrolyte solution or lemon juice (those with kidney issues should check with their doctors on the consumption of water with electrolytes),” adds

[Dr Suranjit Chatterjee](https://m.timesofindia.com/topic/Dr-Suranjit-Chatterjee), Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine at Indraprastha Apollo, Delhi. Excessive heat can have an adverse effect on your skin and hair too.

[Dr Dolly Gupta](https://m.timesofindia.com/topic/Dr-Dolly-Gupta), Cosmetic Dermatologist and hair transplant surgeon from Kolkata, agreed and said, “Too much of sun rays can make your skin look dull, and can lead to heat rash, pigmentation, tanning, etc. Sweating may cause fungal infections. To avoid all these problems, wash your face with water as many times as possible and applying sunscreen is a must. Add water or gel-based skincare products during summer. Cover your hair with a scarf when you are out in the sun. Shampoo your hair regularly to get rid of the sweat and hair fall in this heat.”

**Avoid tea, coffee, alcohol, instead have water, chaach, coconut water:**

This is not the time to increase your caffeine intake. Experts say that one should try cooler drinks and add lots of water and avoid oily food. “Extreme heat can cause damage to our body. The damage can be in two ways – heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Hence, it’s important to keep ourselves hydrated and maintain the water and electrolyte content in our bodies. Drink potable water, free of contamination,” points out Dr Chatterjee.

Tea, coffee, and alcoholic beverages can also cause dehydration.

[Koyel Pal Chowdhury](https://m.timesofindia.com/topic/Koyel-Pal-Chowdhury), Research Dietician of SSKM Hospital, Kolkata, said, “Staying hydrated is very important in this heat. One has to be careful of his/her diet too. Drink as much water or other non-alcoholic fluids all through the day, even if you are not thirsty. Avoid fried, spicy or fatty food, especially red meat, as it increases the body temperature. Excessive tea, coffee, carbonated drinks or packaged juice must be avoided. Instead, have coconut water or nimbu pani without adding sugar. Have homemade fish/chicken curry and sabzi at home. Include fresh fruits like watermelon, pomegranate, basil seeds, mint, pears, cucumber, pineapple, lassi (without sugar), dahi (homemade), barley water, sattu sherbet (if there is no gastric issue) etc in your diet to keep cool and hydrated this summer.” Adding, nutritionist Sapna Jaysingh Patel, Founder of Health Before Wealth, says, “In hot weathers, we tend to sweat a lot which leads to a loss of water in our body, and due to our morning habit of drinking caffeinated drinks, we feel more dehydrated as they have a diuretic effect which makes you lose fluids.”

All outdoor physical activities that can cause exertion should be avoidedn Have water, chaach, nimbu paani and coconut water. Avoid hot, fried and oily food and caffeine.

* Wear loose-fitting, light-coloured clothes and carry an umbrella.
* Protect your skin from the damage by the extreme heat by applying sunscreen.
* Elderly, pets and kids should take proper measures before stepping out.

**Nausea, headache, fatigue, increased thirst: Symptoms of heat exhaustion:**

Symptoms like fatigue, nausea, increased thirst, headache, raised body temperature and extreme weakness, should be watched carefully. “If you have these symptoms, you may take necessary precautions to prevent progression to more serious problems like heat stroke. The key to preventing this is avoiding direct exposure to the sun. If you are having symptoms, shift to an area with shade. Mist of cool air for evaporative cooling helps the most to bring down the temperature.

Elderly people, people with comorbidity and children should take proper precautions and can go outdoors during dusk and dawn,” advises Dr Satish Koul, Director, Internal Medicine, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurgaon.