

Cooling Centers and COVID-19

High temperatures are a major threat to the public's health. Being exposed to high temperatures or extreme heat, humidity, and poor air quality can cause heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and even death. Cooling centers are places where people can go when they do not have a cool place or air conditioning at home to get relief from the heat. COVID-19 prevention measures are required at cooling centers to protect visitors and staff.

1. What is a Cooling Center?

Cooling centers are places in a community where you can cool down during hot weather, especially if you do not have access to air conditioning, such as libraries, community, and senior centers.

2. Is it safe to go to a Cooling Center?

Yes. The health and safety of staff and visitors at cooling centers is our highest priority. The COVID-19 prevention measures include:

- **Admission.** Individuals with COVID-19 or who have symptoms of COVID-19 are not allowed inside. Close contacts of someone who has COVID-19 are allowed inside as long as they do not have symptoms, wear a protective mask at all times, and stay at least six feet away from other households.
- **Masks.** Masks are required, except for children under age 2 and persons with certain disabilities. No staff or guests will be allowed to enter a cooling center without a mask. See COVID-19 [Mask Wearing Rules and Recommendations](#).
- **Communication.** Signage is posted inside reminding staff and visitors of key protective actions. These include masking, respiratory etiquette, hand washing, and physical distancing. If eating or drinking is allowed, signs will also remind visitors that they must be seated while eating or drinking and must keep their mask on unless actively eating or drinking.
- **Prevention Supplies.** Bathrooms are stocked with supplies for hand washing with soap and water.
- **Cleaning.** Cooling centers follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [cleaning and disinfecting guidelines for community facilities](#).

3. Why is spending time in air-conditioned places important?

Spending at least a few hours in air conditioning each day during hot weather can help reduce the risk of heat-related illness. This is especially important when there are many days of constant heat and high overnight temperatures. Air conditioning is especially important for those who are older, very young children, and those who have [certain health conditions](#).

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4. What is heat-related illness?

Heat-related illness occurs when the body is unable to cool itself. The most common heat-related illnesses are heat or sun stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat rash. [Learn more about identifying the symptoms of heat-related illness and what to do.](#)

5. What other steps should I take to cool off during extreme heat?

Below are some steps you can take to cool off during extreme heat if you cannot get to a cooling center:

- Close window shades and curtains in your home to keep the sunlight out
- Drink plenty of water or nonalcoholic and caffeine-free liquids
- Take a cool shower or bath
- Limit strenuous activities, such as exercising outdoors
- Avoid using your stove or oven

6. Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions, please contact 2-1-1.

For more information

For more information and advice, please visit the County's *Stay Healthy in the Heat* webpage at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/climatechange/ExtremeHeat.htm>.