# Nearly 600 deaths expected amid England and Wales heatwave as climate change drives record temperatures



Nearly 600 excess deaths are expected in England and Wales due to the current heatwave sweeping across the country, according to scientists from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Imperial College London. Their research estimates approximately 570 additional fatalities between Thursday and Sunday, based on historical mortality data and recent temperature surges. This stark projection follows findings from the World Weather Attribution group, which concluded that the heatwave has been made about 100 times more likely and 2 to 4 degrees Celsius hotter because of climate change. Temperatures are forecast to reach 30°C on Saturday, maintaining the trend of unusually high temperatures in the UK.

The Met Office has issued a second amber heat health alert within two weeks, covering London, the East Midlands, South East, South West, and East of England. This alert is in place until Tuesday evening, underscoring the seriousness of the current heat conditions. Public health advice focuses on measures to prevent dehydration, such as regularly drinking water or diluted squash and avoiding sugary soft drinks or excessive alcohol, which can exacerbate dehydration. People are also encouraged to protect themselves from sun exposure by staying in the shade during peak hours, wearing protective clothing and hats, using sunscreen with a high SPF and UVA rating, and seeking cooler indoor environments or public spaces to escape the heat.

To keep homes cool, experts recommend closing blinds or shutters on sun-facing windows during the day, sleeping in the coolest part of the house, opening windows at night when outdoor temperatures drop to create airflow, and using fans cautiously. Fans should only be used when indoor temperatures are below 35°C and not directed straight at the body to avoid dehydration. Additionally, turning off heating systems and unnecessary electronic devices can prevent indoor heat build-up.

Recognising heat-related illnesses is crucial. Heat exhaustion, caused by the body overheating and struggling to cool down, features symptoms such as tiredness, dizziness, headache, muscle cramps, nausea, heavy sweating, and intense thirst. Untreated heat exhaustion can escalate to heatstroke, a life-threatening condition marked by confusion, disorientation, rapid heartbeat, hot and dry skin, seizures, and loss of coordination. Immediate medical attention is essential for heatstroke.

Certain groups are particularly vulnerable during heatwaves, including the elderly, infants, socially isolated people, outdoor workers, and individuals with chronic medical conditions. These populations face higher risks of heat-related illness and death, highlighting the need for targeted public health interventions.

The UK has witnessed a steady increase in heat-related mortality in recent years. The UK Health Security Agency reported over 2,200 heat-associated deaths in England and Wales during the 2023 summer, with the highest rates in the Southeast. This trend echoes concerns raised by insurers and health organisations globally, who recognise climate change as a significant risk that exacerbates not only direct fatalities but also the spread of infectious diseases and mental health challenges linked to environmental disruptions.

Across Europe, the toll of extreme heat is even more alarming. A report from the Barcelona Institute for Global Health revealed that more than 47,000 people died across the continent in 2023 due to heat, with southern European countries bearing the brunt. However, adaptations such as improved public health responses have helped reduce vulnerability, especially among elderly populations.

Scientists warn that the frequency and intensity of heatwaves are likely to increase due to climate phenomena like heat domes, related to changes in the jet stream and atmospheric patterns intensified by greenhouse gas emissions. This ongoing shift poses widespread risks to public health, infrastructure, and ecosystems, reinforcing the urgency of climate action and improved heat-health alerting systems.

Heatwaves also complicate public health responses by contributing indirectly to other hazards, including worsening air pollution, fostering the spread of bacteria, and exacerbating wildfires. Given these risks, monitoring, public education, and preparedness remain key components in mitigating the human cost of rising temperatures in the UK and beyond.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/51893d2c-7c0b-4d5e-8942-560c35fd3673)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/how-extreme-heat-tests-public-health-safety-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/how-extreme-heat-tests-public-health-safety-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/how-extreme-heat-tests-public-health-safety-2025-06-24/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-mortality-monitoring-report-2023), [[7]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-summary-heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-summary-heat-mortality-monitoring-reports)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/more-than-47000-people-died-europe-last-year-due-heat-report-says-2024-08-12/), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/517dbcae-36ff-4001-a6c1-b2470c51d351)
* Paragraph 8 – [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/51893d2c-7c0b-4d5e-8942-560c35fd3673)
* Paragraph 9 – [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/517dbcae-36ff-4001-a6c1-b2470c51d351), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/how-extreme-heat-tests-public-health-safety-2025-06-24/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/weather/heatwave-health-uk-europe-risks-safety-cool-down-b2778714.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-mortality-monitoring-report-2023> - The UK Health Security Agency's 2023 report estimated 2,295 heat-associated deaths in England and Wales during the summer, with the highest mortality observed in the Southeast region. The report highlights the increasing trend of heat-associated deaths over recent years, emphasizing the need for effective heat-health alerting systems and public health interventions to mitigate the risks of extreme heat events.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/more-than-47000-people-died-europe-last-year-due-heat-report-says-2024-08-12/> - A report from the Barcelona Institute for Global Health revealed that over 47,000 people died in Europe in 2023 due to extreme heat, with southern European countries experiencing the most significant impact. The study indicates that societal adaptations to high temperatures have significantly mitigated the vulnerability and mortality among the elderly during recent summers.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/517dbcae-36ff-4001-a6c1-b2470c51d351> - Insurers are recognising climate change as a significant risk to health, with increasing extreme weather events leading to higher rates of excess deaths and illness. The Geneva Association and Wellcome emphasise the adverse consequences of climate change on health, including direct fatalities, increased infectious diseases, and mental health impacts from environmental disruption.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/51893d2c-7c0b-4d5e-8942-560c35fd3673> - Extreme heat, driven by 'heat domes', has gripped parts of the US and Europe, with temperatures surpassing 40°C in several regions. Scientists attribute these intense weather events to quasi-resonant amplification in the jet stream, which causes atmospheric systems to stagnate, and warn that extreme weather will become more frequent and intense as greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/how-extreme-heat-tests-public-health-safety-2025-06-24/> - Extreme heat poses significant health risks, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, particularly when paired with high humidity. Vulnerable groups include the elderly, infants, socially isolated individuals, outdoor workers, and those with chronic conditions. Heatwaves often result in underreported deaths, as heat is not always listed as the primary cause, and can also promote the spread of bacteria and exacerbate wildfires and air pollution.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-summary-heat-mortality-monitoring-reports/heat-summary-heat-mortality-monitoring-reports> - The UK Health Security Agency's heat mortality monitoring reports provide estimates of heat-associated deaths during heat episodes each summer. Over recent years, there has been a general trend of increasing heat-episode days and heat-associated deaths, highlighting the need for continuous improvement in the Weather-Health Alerting system to mitigate the risks of extreme heat events.