

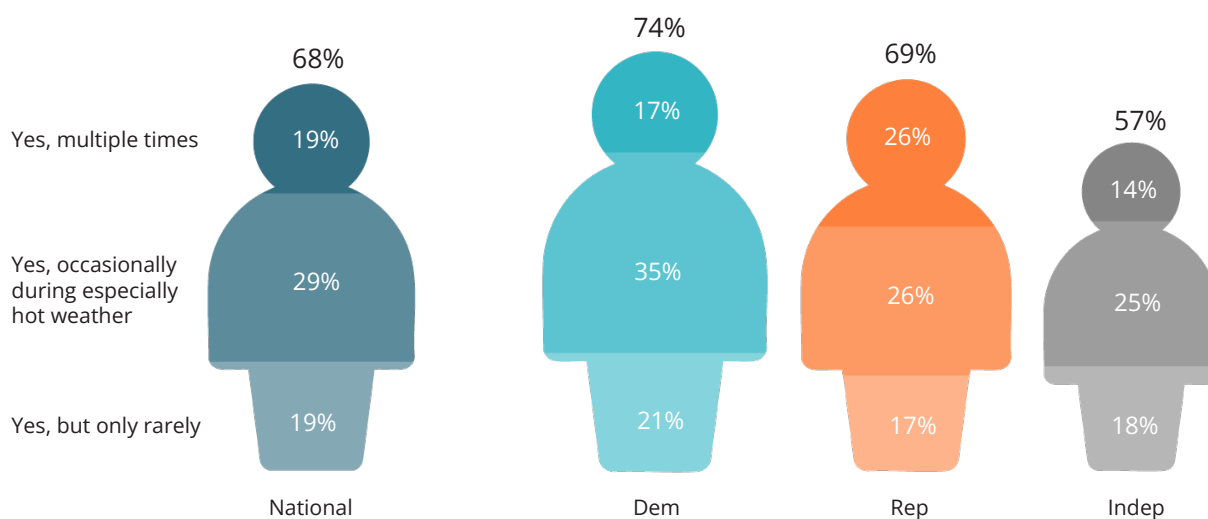
Extreme Heat Is Harming Americans' Health — And Communities Aren't Ready

Extreme heat is no longer a distant threat. It's a public health crisis unfolding nationwide, with Americans alarmed by its growing impact on health and climate. ecoAmerica's [recent report](#) found that **86% of Americans say extreme heat has increased their concern about climate change**, and nearly **9 in 10 recognize its serious impact on people's health**. But beyond rising concern lies lived experience and questions about local preparedness. A new report from ecoAmerica and the American Public Health Association dives into personal and household experiences with heat-related illness, what health effects are at the top of mind, who is most at risk, and whether local heat resources are keeping up with the growing challenge.

Most Americans Say Heat is Harming Their Health

Nearly 7 in 10 (68%) report that they or someone in their household has experienced health or medical problems caused or worsened by heat waves and extreme heat. Among them, nearly 1 in 5 (19%) say these issues have occurred multiple times, highlighting the recurring nature of heat-related health challenges. 29% say yes occasionally during especially hot weather. And 19% say yes, but only rarely. The impact cuts across political lines, with 74% of Democrats, 69% of Republicans, and 57% of Independents reporting heat-related health problems in their households. This widespread experience underscores that extreme heat is not just a future threat, but a current and personal health crisis affecting millions across the nation.

Majorities have felt the health effects of extreme heat. *Q: Have you or someone in your household experienced health or medical problems that were caused or made worse by heat waves and extreme heat?* Showing total for "Yes, multiple times", "Yes, occasionally", and "Yes, but only rarely". 1,181 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



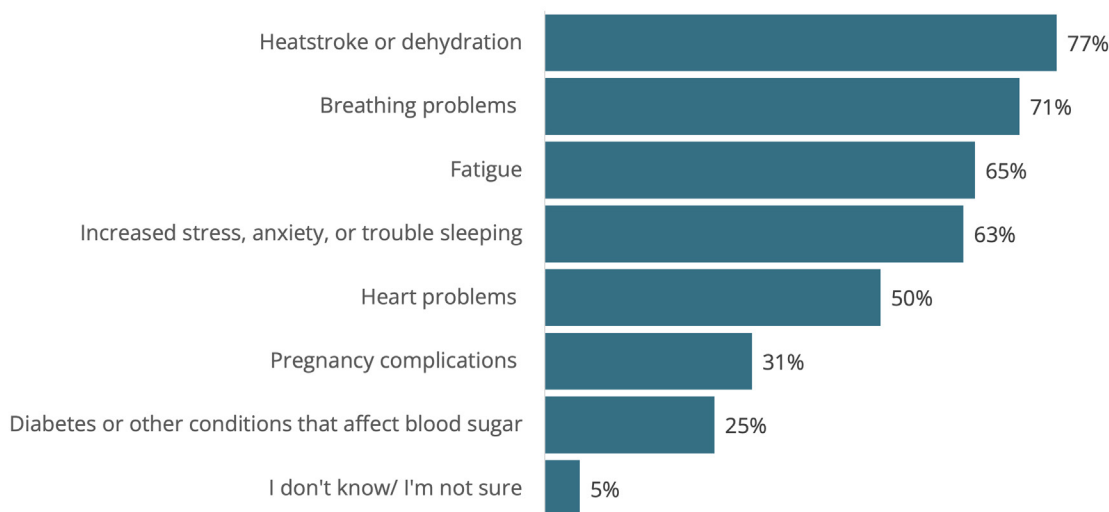
This chart shows that nationally, 68% of Americans say they or someone in their household has experienced health or medical problems caused or made worse by heat waves and extreme heat — 19% say yes multiple times, 29% say yes occasionally during especially hot weather, and 19% say yes but only rarely. Among Democrats, 74% report heat-related health impacts (17% multiple times, 35% occasionally, 21% rarely). Among Independents, 69% report impacts (26% multiple times, 26% occasionally, 17% rarely). Among Republicans, 57% report impacts (14% multiple times, 25% occasionally, 18% rarely).

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Americans Can (Generally) Spot Extreme Heat Health Risks

Americans recognize extreme heat as a driver of serious health problems, with 77% saying it can cause or worsen heatstroke or dehydration. Majorities also connect heat to breathing problems (71%), fatigue (65%), and mental health challenges² such as increased stress, anxiety, or trouble sleeping (63%). Half of Americans (50%) believe extreme heat can worsen heart problems, while nearly a third (31%) also recognize the risk of pregnancy complications. And 1 in 4 (25%) say it can affect conditions like diabetes. Just 5% say they're unsure. So while these findings indicate broad public awareness that extreme heat is not just uncomfortable, it's dangerous, they also show opportunities for education on heat's connection to [heart](#), [pregnancy](#), and [diabetes](#) complications.

Americans recognize a range of health risks from extreme heat. *Q: Which of the following health problems do you believe can be made worse or caused by heat waves and extreme heat? Please select all that apply?* 1,181 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 77% of Americans say heatstroke or dehydration, 71% say breathing problems, 65% say fatigue, 63% say increased stress, anxiety, or trouble sleeping, 50% say heart problems, 31% say pregnancy complications, and 25% say diabetes or other conditions that affect blood sugar can be made worse or caused by heat waves and extreme heat. 5% say I don't know or I'm not sure.

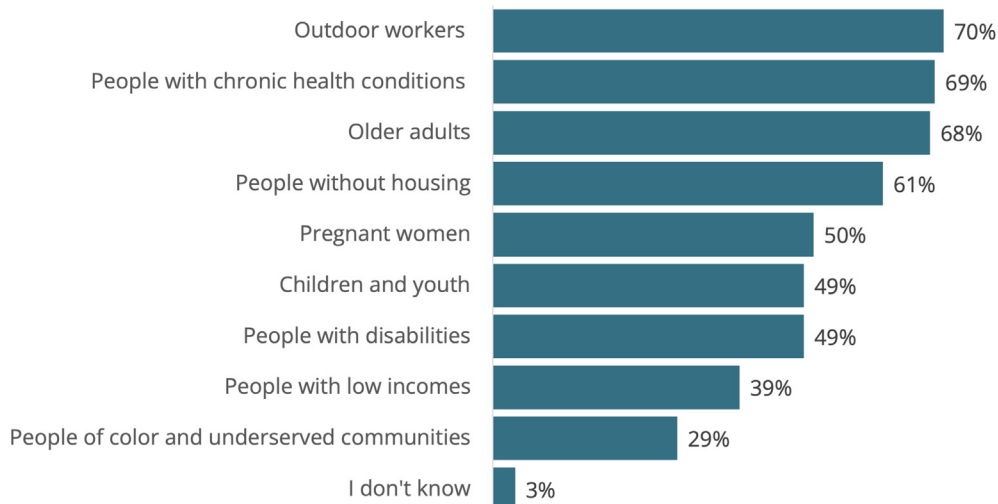
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Outdoor Workers Seen Most at Risk, But There Are Many More

Americans identify many of the communities that bear the brunt of rising temperatures and extreme heat. The majority recognize that certain groups, including outdoor workers (70%), people with chronic health conditions (69%), and older adults (68%), face higher health risks from extreme heat. Awareness is slightly lower for other at-risk communities, including people without housing (61%), pregnant women (50%), children and youth (49%), and people with disabilities (49%). Few Americans see people with low incomes (39%) and people of color and underserved communities (29%) as most at risk, highlighting a continued need to raise awareness about how heat impacts some groups more than others. Only 3% say they don't know.

² ecoAmerica, in partnership with APA, published a report that chronicles the impacts of climate change on Americans' mental health and psychological well-being. Read more [here](#).

Who Americans say is most at risk from extreme heat. *Q: Which of the following groups do you think are most at risk of health problems from rising temperatures and extreme heat? Please select all that apply.* 1,181 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 70% of Americans say outdoor workers, 69% say people with chronic health conditions, 68% say older adults, 61% say people without housing, 50% say pregnant women, 49% say children and youth, 49% say people with disabilities, 39% say people with low incomes, and 29% say people of color and underserved communities are most at risk of health problems from rising temperatures and extreme heat. 3% say I don't know.

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Communities Are Missing the Mark on Local Heat Support

As temperatures climb, awareness of life-saving local resources remains low. Just over half (53%) believe cooling centers are available in their local area. Less than half (46%) are aware of emergency alerts or early warning systems, help with paying electricity bills or avoiding shut-offs during heat waves (40%), or the accessibility of health services for heat-related illness (40%). Few report awareness of outreach programs to check on vulnerable residents (36%) or help to prepare homes for extreme heat (28%). Only 1 in 5 (20%) say transportation to cooling centers is available. Meanwhile, 12% of Americans say they don't know of resources available in their area. These findings point to the dual and urgent needs for improved communication and access to life-saving local services as heat waves become more frequent and intense.

Gaps in knowledge and availability of local heat resources. *Q: To the best of your knowledge, which of the following resources are available in your local area to help people during periods of extreme heat? Please select all that apply.* 1,181 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

 **53%**

Cooling centers

 **46%**

Emergency alerts or early warning systems

 **40%**

Help with paying electricity bills or avoiding shut-offs during heat waves

 **40%**

Health services for heat-related illness

 **36%**

Outreach programs to check on vulnerable residents

 **28%**

Help to prepare your home for extreme heat

 **20%**

Transportation to cooling centers

 **12%**

None/ I don't know

This chart shows that nationally, 53% say cooling centers, 46% say emergency alerts or early warning systems, 40% say help with paying electricity bills or avoiding shut-offs during heat waves, 40% say health services for heat-related illness, 36% say outreach programs to check on vulnerable residents, 28% say help to prepare your home for extreme heat, and 20% say transportation to cooling centers are available in their local area to help people during periods of extreme heat. 12% say none/I don't know.

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The Time to Act Is Now

Extreme heat is already putting millions of Americans at risk. These findings make it clear: leaders at every level must act now. That means strengthening local response plans, expanding access to life-saving resources, and clearly communicating where and how to get help.

Full data is available in the accompanying [toplines](#).

Methodology

ecoAmerica designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online from June 10-13, 2025, using SurveyMonkey. The survey yielded a total of 1,181 complete adult responses and used the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to weigh the national general population and reflect the demographic composition of the US. The sample was drawn from an online panel, and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The margin of error for the sample is +/-3%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling errors. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The sampling error size depends on the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 1,181 respondents answered "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3 points or range from 47% to 53%.

Suggested Citation

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