



**Safety Alert or Drug Alert**  
**\*\*PPE and Heat Stress \*\***

**Distribution:** All Clinicians | All Services

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RISK	ACTION	PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
<p>Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) in warm/hot environments increases the risk of heat stress. This occurs when the body is unable to cool itself enough to maintain a healthy temperature. Heat stress can cause heat exhaustion and lead to heat stroke if the person is unable to cool down.</p> <p>Clinicians in primary care are more likely to be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff to read Central Alert ref: CEM/CMO/2020/027 <i>Personal protective equipment and heat: risk of heat stress</i>. Available from: <a href="http://www.sussexccgs.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CEM_CMO_2020_027.pdf">http://www.sussexccgs.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CEM_CMO_2020_027.pdf</a></li> <li>• Clinician should take regular breaks and make sure they are hydrated. Refreshment facilities are provided.</li> <li>• Clinicians should be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat stress and dehydration (thirst, dry mouth, dark or strong-smelling urine, urinating infrequently or in small amounts, inability to concentrate, muscle cramps, fainting). They should not wait until they start to feel unwell before they take a break.</li> <li>• All staff should be aware of who within the team is wearing PPE for a long period of time on any given day and look out for the signs of heat stress (e.g. confusion, looking pale or clammy, fast breathing) in each other.</li> <li>• All staff are now encouraged to use fans to keep workspaces cool. Clinicians still must not use fans during wound care, phlebotomy etc. due to the risk of cross infection.</li> <li>• Between shifts, staff should try to stay cool to give their bodies a chance to recover.</li> </ul>	<p>All staff</p> <p>Clinicians</p> <p>Clinicians</p> <p>All staff</p> <p>All staff/clinicians</p> <p>All staff</p>

working in full PPE for extended periods of time in hot, enclosed environments . Staff undertaking cleaning will also be wearing PPE for extended periods of time.		
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PHE, 2020. CEM/CMO/2020/027 *Personal protective equipment and heat: risk of heat stress*.

Available from:

[http://www.sussexccgs.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CEM\\_CMO\\_2020\\_027.pdf](http://www.sussexccgs.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CEM_CMO_2020_027.pdf).