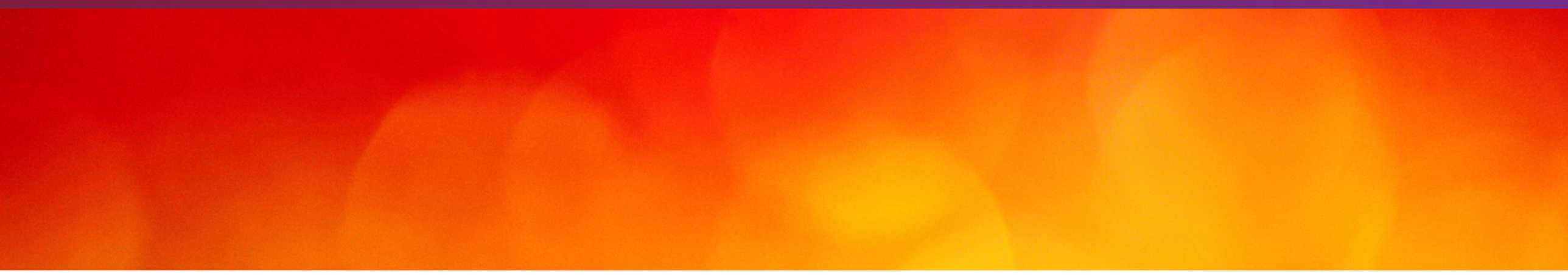
MEDICINE FOR A CHANGING PLANET



Extreme Heat: Key Clinical Points

Host risk factors for heat illness:

- Age: infants, elderly
- Medical co-morbidities
  - Heart disease
  - Respiratory disease
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - Diabetes
  - Psychiatric conditions
  - Pregnancy
- Medications
  - Psychiatric medications (SSRIs)
  - Antihypertensives (ACE inhibitors, thiazides, other diuretics)
- Mobility
- Lives alone

Environmental risk factors for heat illness:

- Heat index (combines temperature and relative humidity)
- Location
- Housing
- Access to cooling stations

Preventative counseling:

- Improve host factors
- Reduce environmental exposures
- Learn about local resources in the community

Heat exhaustion:

- Normal to increased temperature, weakness, fainting
- Treatment: oral rehydration, move to cooler location, apply ice to groin/axilla

vs.

Heat stroke:

- Altered mental status, increased temperature, cardiovascular effects
- Treatment:
  - Check electrolytes, CBC, LFTs, coags, CPK, UA. Check CXR, if AMS get CT of head
  - Rapid cooling, aggressive hydration, avoid antipyretics

Photo credit: Alexander Grey, Unsplash

The big picture:

- Climate change is making heat waves more common and extreme and exacerbating existing inequities in heat exposure.
- Healthcare providers and systems must have concrete plans in place to deal with heat events and advocate for smarter climate policy that can reduce the severity of future heat events.