

! With summer coming soon we encourage practices to prepare for changes in temperature and weather conditions. Australian summers can bring extreme heat and dry conditions that leave us vulnerable to bushfires and other natural disasters. This QulK Tip is to help prepare you and your practice for summer and to be able to respond to any potential emergencies.

### 1. Prepare your practice

General practices play a key role in informing patients and responding to health concerns of the community. Having an up-to-date emergency plan including a process to communicate any practice closures to your patients is a requirement to meet the RACGP standards for accreditation.

- [Appoint a designated staff member](#) who can update your website and/or send notifications to your patients.
- [Contact Capital Health Network \(CHN\)](#) at 6287 8099 or email [primarycare@chnact.org.au](mailto:primarycare@chnact.org.au) to communicate any practice changes should you be required to activate your emergency plan.

These resources can assist your practice in creating an emergency plan:

- [Managing Emergencies in General Practice](#) – RACGP
- [Emergency Response Planning Tool](#) – RACGP

### 2. Review relevant HealthPathways

- [Acute Asthma in Adults](#)
- [Burn Injuries](#)
- [General Practice Management During a Disaster](#)
- [Heat-related Illness](#)
- [Post Natural Disaster Health](#)
- [Preparing a General Practice for a Disaster](#)
- [Preparing Patients for a Disaster](#)

### 3. Review your digital health capability and infrastructure

- [CHN Digital Health QulK Step](#)
- [Australian Digital Health Agency](#)
- [My Health Record](#)

### 4. Identify your vulnerable patients

Identifying your vulnerable patients will assist you to develop emergency action plans with them and prioritise care. Your POLAR software is an essential audit tool that can identify and group your patients. Visit the [Knowledge Base](#) to learn how to filter your patient list or contact the QI team.

### 5. Prepare your patients

It is important to educate patients, particularly those who are vulnerable, on how to prepare for a potential emergency. The following resources might be helpful:

- [Air Quality Health Advice Portal](#) – ACTHCD
- [Avoiding Heat-Related Stress](#) – ACTHCD
- [First Aid for Asthma Charts](#) – National Asthma Council (NAC)
- [Home Emergency Kit](#) – ACT Emergency Services Agency
- [Plan for Natural Disasters and Emergencies](#) – NDSS

### 6. Relevant health resources

Here are a few resources to assist you and your patients in preventing and managing health issues that may arise over the summer season.

- [Bushfires and Asthma Factsheet](#) – NAC
- [The Needs of People with Diabetes in Natural Disasters and Other Emergencies](#) – NDSS
- [How to Protect Yourself and Others from Bushfire Smoke](#) – ANU
- [Preventing Thunderstorm Asthma in Individuals](#) – NAC
- [Sun Safety](#) – Cancer Council Australia

### 7. Stay up to date

- [AirRater App](#)
- [Air Quality in the ACT](#) – ACTHCD
- [Canberra Forecast](#) – Bureau of Meteorology
- [Chief Health Officer Alerts](#) – ACTHCD
- [Fires Near Me](#) – NSW Rural Fire Service
- [Incident Updates](#) – ACT Emergency Services Agency
- [Ultraviolet Radiation Index](#) – ARPANSA
- [Water quality in our lakes, ponds and rivers](#) - ACT Government

### 8. Get to know care options over the holiday season

Ensure patients know where to access the right health care at the right time when you are closed. The new Medicare Urgent Care Clinic in Woden will operate over the holidays, providing episodic care for urgent conditions. Other GPs open can be found on the [healthdirect Service Finder](#). For more after hours care options, visit our [website](#).

### 9. Staff support and wellbeing

- [AccessEAP](#) – Free counselling provided by CHN for those working in general practices, pharmacies and allied health settings.
- [Self-care and Mental Health Resources](#) – RACGP
- [TEN – The Essential Network for Health Professionals](#) – Black Dog Institute
- [Peer support & counselling](#) – Nurse Midwife Health Program Australia
- [Nurse & Midwife Support](#) – NM Support