

Stay indoors if you can during heatwave, expert says

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"It depends on whether residents practise water conservation," Debbie Korolnek, general manager of water and waste water, said Tuesday. "The reserves are down to around 50 per cent in Keswick and Nobleton is another sensitive area."

But the water conservation message is being heard, she said.

"People are being more cautious about watering lawns or washing cars. It's a big difference from 2001, when we had a ban on outdoor water use from Canada

Day to Labour Day."

The high temperatures and lack of rain have already hurt farmers, according to Terry O'Connor, president of the York Region branch of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

"Many of the crops are setting their seeds prematurely; they think it's August," Mr. O'Connor said. "They're way ahead of what they normally would be. And it's the same for beef or pork farms — without rain, the pastures aren't recuperating and farmers are feeding stock hay they were putting away for the winter."

The first step in keeping cool is to close doors and windows to beat the heat and conserve electricity, the Conservation Council of Ontario says. The secret lies in inviting the cool air in at night and

shutting out the hot air in the day, the council recommends.

Also, close drapes in the morning, use window fans at night and minimize electrical use in the house.

Avoiding the outdoors is good advice, according to public health nurse Irene Wu-Lau.

"If you can, stay indoors, especially between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.," Ms Wu-Lau said.

But for those who must venture out, she recommends wearing sunscreen and re-applying it every two hours, seeking shady areas whenever you can and drinking lots of water.

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