

Summer Heat Safety – Learn More about How to Stay Safe in the Summer Heat

While many of us enjoy the warm summer weather, it's important to take precautions in case extreme heat strikes. People aged 65 years or older are more prone to heat-related problems as they generally don't adjust as well as younger people to sudden changes in temperatures. They're more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat. And, they are more likely to take prescription medicines that affect the body's ability to control its temperature or sweat. By evaluating your needs, you can plan for any heat related situation.

- Slow down! Reduce or reschedule strenuous activities until the extreme heat breaks.
- Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of water or cool, nonalcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages, even if you are not thirsty.
- Consider how potential power outages during periods of extreme heat might affect you. Plan to be temporarily self-sufficient if the electricity goes out.
- Identify the resources you use on a daily basis and what you can do if they are limited or not available. Make provisions for medications that require refrigeration, and plan arrangements to get to a cooling center if needed.
- Think about what you need to maintain your health, safety, and independence. Gather any specialized items such as extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, and medications. Also include non-perishable food and water, items for service animals, pets, and a cooler.
- Check on older or ill family, friends and neighbors. This is especially important for people who do not have air conditioning or those who spend much of their time alone.
- Be watchful for signs of heat stroke and dehydration. These include shallow breathing, a lack of perspiration, dizziness, dry mouth, and headaches.
- If you do go outside, stay in the shade and wear a wide brim hat and light colored, loose fitting clothing.

Tips for caregiver- keep a close eye on those in your care by visiting them at least twice a day, and ask yourself these questions:

Are they drinking enough water?

Do they have access to air conditioning?

Do they know how to keep cool?

Do they show any signs of heat stress?