

Hot Weather Safety Tips for Older Adults

Hot weather is more likely to cause health problems in older adults than in younger ones. About 200 Americans die of health problems caused by high heat and humidity every year. Most of them are 50 or older.

Physical changes make it more difficult for older adults to cool down. Older people may not feel hot when the temperature is dangerously high. They are also less likely to feel thirsty even when they are dehydrated which means they can lose dangerous amounts of water.

Chronic diseases and medications can aggravate heat related problems.

Temperatures don't have to be that high to cause health problems in older adults. Temperatures in the low 90's can be very dangerous.

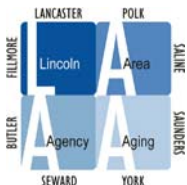
When temperatures hit 90 degrees older people can consider the following:

- Turn on the air conditioner or go where it's air conditioned - a shopping mall, grocery store, senior center, movie theater, museum or library. (Fans aren't enough.)

- Do not walk long distances, lift heavy objects or do other strenuous things.
- Drink lots of water and other clear drinks that don't contain alcohol or caffeine. (If urine is a light yellow color you're drinking enough water. If it's darker yellow, you need to drink more.)
- Take cool showers, baths or sponge baths.
- Wear light weight, light colored, loose fitting clothing.
- Wear hats.
- Stay out of the sun.

Some of the health problems caused by heat and what we need to know about them are as follows:

Condition:	What is is:	Warning signs:	What to do:
Dehydration	A loss of water in your body that can be deadly.	Weakness, headache, muscle cramps, dizziness, confusion and passing out.	Call your doctor or 911. Meanwhile drink plenty of water and if possible sports drinks such as Gatorade which contain important salts called electrolytes that your body loses when you're dehydrated.
Heat stroke	A very dangerous rise in your body temperature that can be deadly.	A body temperature of 103 or higher, red, hot and dry skin, a fast pulse, headache, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, confusion and passing out.	Call 911 immediately. Move to a cool, shady place, take off or loosen heavy clothes, drink water or drinks such as Gatorade. If possible douse yourself with cool water or use cold wet compresses to help lower your body temperature.
Heat Exhaustion	Illness caused by too much heat and dehydration.	Heavy sweating or no sweating, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, paleness, cold or clammy skin, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting and fainting.	Without delay move to a cool, shady place and drink plenty of fluids such as water or drinks such as Gatorade. If you don't feel better fast call 911.
Heat Syncope	Fainting caused by high temperatures.	Dizziness or fainting	Lie down, put your feet up and drink plenty of water and cool fluids such as Gatorade.



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