



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Stay Safe in the Heat

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It's July and time for that hot summer weather we all anticipate. Taking precautions to stay safe and healthy during the hot summer months is vitally important. Please remember to check on your neighbors during times when the temperatures are high. Keep in mind these wonderful tips from our friends at the Ohio Department of Aging.

Excessive Heat and Older Adults

- People age 60 and older are at higher risk for heat-related illness.
- Older bodies do not adjust as well to temperature extremes or sudden changes.
- Chronic health conditions can upset normal body responses to heat, like perspiration.
- Prescription medicines can impair the body's ability to regulate temperature.

During extreme weather (including very hot days), check on older neighbors and loved ones to ensure they are safe and healthy. Questions to ask include:

- What will you eat for breakfast/lunch/dinner and how will you prepare it?
- How much water are you drinking today?
- What is the temperature in your home? What clothing are you wearing to stay cool?
- How do you feel? Have you been dizzy, disoriented, weak or nauseated?
- Who will you call for help if you need it?

Heat-Related Illnesses

- Heat Cramps: Muscle cramps, most often in the legs, caused by not drinking enough to replace fluids and nutrients lost to sweating.
- Heat Exhaustion: Potentially life-threatening condition caused by not enough fluids, hot environments and high body temperatures.
- Heat Stroke: Life-threatening condition caused when the body is unable to regulate its own internal temperature in a hot and humid environment.

Prevent Heat-Related Illness

- Check on older loved ones and encourage them to stay in cool environments.
- Aim for at least eight (8) cups of cool water per day, or two to four cups for every hour of activity in heat.
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- Rest frequently. Avoid strenuous activity when it is hot.
- Seek an air-conditioned environment.
- Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath.
- Plan outdoor activities for early morning or late evening.
- Know the signs of heat stroke: high body temperature, skin changes, lack of sweat, headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion.
- If you suspect heat stroke, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Hot temperatures and high humidity are severe weather. Treat hot days just as you would a stormy or snowy day. Have a plan to stay cool and recognize the signs of heat-related illness and check on older loved ones and neighbors. If you have questions about resources in your community for seniors or for individuals of any age living with a disability, or to find out about possible resources available during extremely hot days such as cooling centers or organizations distributing fans and offering other assistance, please call our Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277 or email us at info@aaa7.org.