

HEAT STRESS

Safety Tips for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

South Carolina is known for its historically hot summers which puts seniors are at a higher risk of developing heat-related illness. During periods of extreme heat, people can take certain precautions to prevent heat-related illnesses, such as Heat Stress.

Seniors aged 65 years and older are more prone to heat stress than younger people for several reasons:

- * Older Adults do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
- * They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.
- * They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle Cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin: may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate: fast and weak
- Breathing: fast and shallow

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself?

You can follow these prevention tips to protect yourself from heat-related stress:

- ✓ Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. Contact your local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
- ✓ Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device during an extreme heat event.
- ✓ Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- ✓ Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- ✓ Don't use the stove or oven to cook—it will make you and your house hotter.
- ✓ Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- ✓ Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- ✓ Check the local news for health and safety updates.
- ✓ Seek medical care immediately if you have, or someone you know has, symptoms of heat-related illness like muscle cramps, headaches, nausea or vomiting.

