

BEAT THE HEAT

Caregivers Guidelines

Heatwaves are described as periods of unusually hot weather/high temperatures, that last for a couple of days or more and have a high impact on people's health, especially older adults, and it can be fatal. Therefore, a set of guidelines have been developed to help older adults and caregivers to better cope with the heat.



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Emergency Contacts:

Insert relevant local contacts

Care Measures



Consult a doctor/pharmacist about **medication**

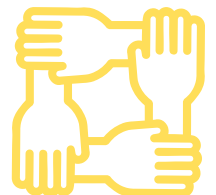
When **making the bed** put less clothing and seek cotton, silk or linen **materials**

Avoid having any **heat-producing** appliances on (e.g. lamps, TV)

Visit older adults and more **vulnerable people** regularly

Discuss extreme **heat** to raise **awareness** and increase **knowledge**

Baths and showers should be with **lukewarm** water, or **cold**, when overheated



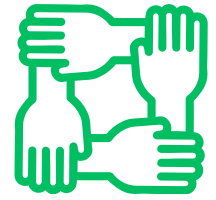
Seek available **training** on heat-related emergency **treatment**

In case of severe **heat symptoms**, call emergency contacts

Offer **fluids** and **liquids** regularly (except for older adults suffering from heart-failure)

Don't **overdo** the cold of air conditioning (no more than **6 degrees** colder than the temperature **outside**)

Always have **water** accessible
Control the hours of **sleep** of older adults (heat makes us sleep less)
Recommend a **healthy** and well-balanced **diet**



Change older adults' **clothing** regularly, because of **heat accumulation**
Older adults should wear a **hat**, **sunglasses** and **sunscreen** when outside
Do a regular **check-up** on older adults' **weight** as **dehydration** can reduce it
Do a regular **check-up** on older adults' **blood pressure**

Practical Tips

- 1 • Offer fluids at specific routine moments and keep a written record of it
- 2 • Older adults with a specific medical history should consult their doctor before increasing the ingestion of fluids
- 3 • Recommend the regular consumption of fruit and vegetables
- 4 • Check if the older adult's clothing and shoes are comfortable enough
- 5 • Encourage older adults to buy hats and dark tinted glasses
- 6 • Ensure good accessibility to different forms of hydration
- 7 • Keep in mind the older adult's preferences
- 8 • Ensure good accessibility to toilet facilities
- 9 • Stay aware of dehydration symptoms
- 10 • Be aware of fruit with too much sugar
- 11 • Keep older adults comfortable to express themselves

Self-care Measures

- Keep your colleagues close to you and do a regular check-up with them;
- Wear comfortable clothing of natural materials;
- Take breaks and cool down in well-conditioned rooms whenever possible;
- Use protective and safe equipment at work;
- Use sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses when outside;
- Avoid liquids with high sugar content;
- Keep hydrated and avoid alcoholic beverages;
- Try to alternate work shifts, if possible;
- Be aware of possible symptoms of exhaustion

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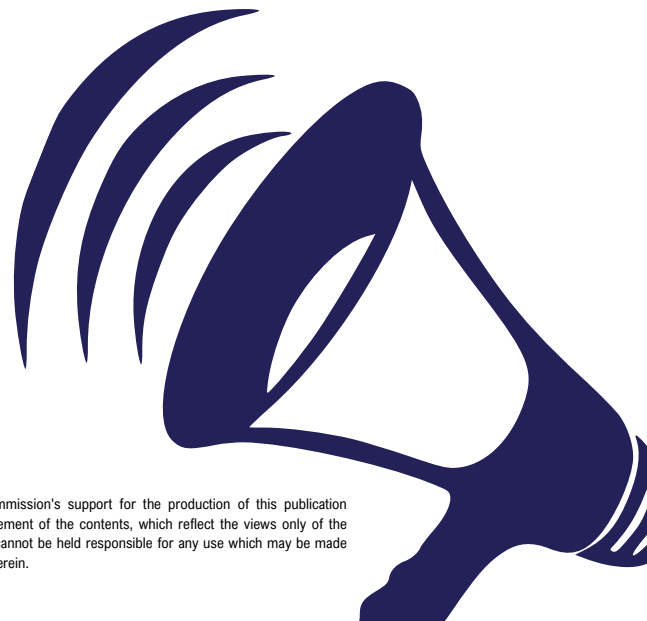


Extra Information



Heatwaves impact on health: several heat related illnesses can emerge and the most vulnerable groups need special attention

- Older adults with diabetes, heart-failure and dementia;
- Older adults that are economically and socially deprived, frail or dependent;
- Older adults that take multiple medications for various health conditions;
- Older adults with a history of an increased alcohol consumption;
- Older adults with chronic diseases;
- Older adults that live in especially hot areas or houses;
- Isolated persons can be at greater risk;
- Dehydration can worsen the health condition of more clinically vulnerable older adults.



Extra Information

Heatwaves impact on health: several heat related illnesses can emerge, and the most vulnerable groups need special attention



Heat exhaustion - Excessive loss of water and electrolytes through sweating, especially serious among older adults with high blood pressure. More common symptoms are intense thirst, heavy sweating, pallor, muscle cramps, tiredness and weakness, headache, nausea and vomiting, and fainting. Try to find a place to rest and drink plenty of fluids, so that heat exhaustion doesn't turn into heat stroke

Heat oedema - Hands, feet and ankles will swell. No treatment is needed apart from reassurance that this will settle in time. It is advised to elevate feet and legs to reduce the swelling.

Heat Stroke - The body's temperature gets out of control, triggering symptoms such as: high fever, red, hot, dry skin, rapid and strong pulse, low blood pressure, irrational or erratic behavior, low urine output or dark urine, headache, nausea, dizziness, confusion and partial or total loss of consciousness, excessive sweating or dry skin that doesn't sweat (anhidrosis), muscle cramps. One should call the emergency number and, while waiting, do what they can to lower the body temperature: move the person to a cool place, remove excess of clothing, if cold-water immersion isn't possible, apply cold compresses to the groin, back of neck, forehead, and armpits. Do not give fluids if the person is unconscious.

Heat Syncope - Occurs in individuals that are unacclimatized to the heat, causing excessive sweating and dizziness.

Try to find a cool place to rest, putting the legs up and drinking plenty of water to make the dizziness go away, remove tight clothing, sip water containing salt, or another drink containing electrolytes, slowly.

Dehydration - Resulting from the lack of fluids in the body it can present symptoms such as changes in behaviour (irritability or prostration), dry mouth, dull eyes, dull skin, and lack of elasticity, lightheadedness, tiredness, and dark-colored urine. If the dehydration is severe, the symptoms are: lack of urination, rapid heartbeat, rapid breathing, confusion, and fainting. It is advised to drink water slowly, or to take ice cubes or popsicles. Avoid drinks that can increase dehydration (e.g., alcohol or coffee). If unable to replace fluids by one's own, medical treatment might be required such as receiving fluids through a drip.

Heat Cramps - Can result from intense heat exposure, inadequate hydration and intense sweat for long periods. Cramps can become serious in people with heart problems. Most common symptoms are painful muscle spasms of the abdomen and extremities of the body (legs and arms). It is advised to stop, stretch the muscles and massage them, find a cool place to rest (seek for shades) and drink plenty of water. Seek medical attention if the cramps persist.

