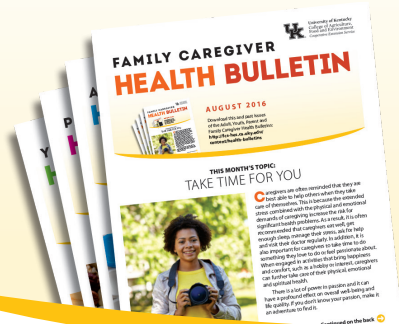




FAMILY CAREGIVER

HEALTH BULLETIN



JULY 2018

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<http://fcs-hes.ca.uky.edu/content/health-bulletins>

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

STAY SAFE DURING THE SUMMER HEAT



While too much heat can be dangerous at any age, many factors make older adults more susceptible to heat-related health problems, including decreased ability to adjust to sudden changes in temperature, chronic medical conditions that change the body's reaction to heat and medications that affect the body's ability to control temperature and/or sweat.

Health problems can range from muscle cramps, nausea, headaches and dizziness to more serious problems such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke is a potentially life-threatening condition that requires medical attention. It is the most severe consequence of overheating.

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Listen to the weather forecast so you know when to avoid the outdoors.

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Symptoms of overheating

As a caregiver, it is important to recognize the symptoms of overheating in your loved one and for yourself:

- Sudden dizziness
- Fatigue
- Lack of coordination
- Cold, clammy skin
- Thirst
- Headache
- Nausea
- Muscle spasms and/or cramps
- Ankle swelling

The signs of heat stroke should not be taken lightly. If you or a loved one experience high body temperature, confusion, changes in behavior, fainting (or feelings of faintness), staggering, rapid or weak pulse, dry or flushed skin, or lack of sweating despite the heat, you should seek emergency medical assistance immediately.

Keep a close eye on older loved ones and neighbors and encourage hydration and access to air-conditioning. If you see signs of heat exhaustion, seek medical attention immediately.

Ways to protect yourself

To help protect yourself and loved ones from the heat, the CDC recommends:

- Stay in air conditioned buildings.
- Hydrate with water, fruit or vegetable juices (and don't wait until you are thirsty to drink).
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Keep your house cool by avoiding turning on the stove and oven and cover windows that are in direct sunlight.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.



- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Avoid exercising in the heat of the day.
- Listen to the weather forecast so you know when to avoid the outdoors.

Be sure to keep a close eye on older loved ones and neighbors by visiting them on hot days and noting if the person is doing the right things to stay cool . Always encourage hydration and access to air-conditioning . If you see signs of heat exhaustion, seek medical attention immediately.

REFERENCES:

- CDC. (2017). Heat and Older Adults. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.html>
- McCoy, K. (2011). The dangers of overheating in older adults. Everyday Health. Retrieved from <https://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/overheating-in-older-adults.aspx>

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