

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Survive a Heat Wave / Storm Safety

Worsening summer heat waves can pose *special* health risks to older adults and people with chronic medical conditions. It is important that seniors particularly susceptible to hyperthermia and other heat-related illnesses, know how to safeguard against problems. Air conditioning is one of the best protections against heat-related illness and death. Visit senior centers, movie theaters, libraries or malls to cool off—even for just a few hours.

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. When the body is unable to control its temperature, it rises rapidly and sweating mechanisms fail. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10–15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided. *Heat exhaustion* is less severe, more common, and occurs when the body becomes severely dehydrated. If left untreated, it leads to heat stroke. If you suspect a person is having a problem with the heat, err on the side of caution and insist they get into shade and cool down.

Signs of Heat Exhaustion

- Heavy sweating, cold, clammy skin
- Dizziness or fainting
- A weak and rapid pulse
- Muscle cramps
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Nausea, vomiting or both

Signs of Heat Stroke

- High body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness, nausea, confusion
- Unconsciousness



These are signs of a *life-threatening* emergency. **Have someone call 911** while you begin cooling the person:

- Get him to a shady area.
- Cool him rapidly, however you can: Immerse him in a cool tub of water or shower; spray him with cool water from a garden hose; sponge him with cool water; wrap him in a cool, wet sheet and fan him vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature; continue cooling efforts until body temperature drops to 101–102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the ER for further instructions.
- If he is conscious and able to swallow, give cool water or nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages.

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Storm Readiness - Take Protective Measures

Recovering from an emergency or a natural disaster tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done *today*. Talk to the doctor to determine if the person in your care needs to be admitted to a hospital prior to the emergency.

In addition to the standard supplies of food, water and first aid kits (listed on Red Cross or FEMA websites), consider these additional precautions:

- Create a **network of neighbors**, relatives, friends and co-workers. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary medical equipment.
- List the type and **model numbers of medical devices**, like oxygen tanks and wheelchairs.
- Note **medications that require refrigeration** and have a cooler chest ready.
- If the person in your care is in a wheelchair or has **mobility problems**, plan for how they will evacuate. Have a manual wheelchair as a backup for a motorized one.
- Be prepared to **bring your own durable medical equipment** to an evacuation shelter. Most shelters have them.
- For blind or visually impaired persons, keep an **extra cane** by the bed and **attach a whistle** to it.
- For hearing impaired, **store hearing aids in a container** attached to the nightstand or bedpost, so they can be located quickly.
- Have **ID information** for the person as well as copies of emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card.
- Ask your doctor about stocking up on a **week's supply of all prescription medication**.
- Make sure everyone knows where the first-aid kit and **emergency supplies are located**.
- Make a **communication plan** so if you are separated from your family you will know how to contact one another.
- Designate a **backup caregiver** in case you can't reach the person in your care.

In an emergency, people with dementia can sense when something is wrong. Remain calm, explain what is happening simply, and give clear directions.

Source: CDC; FEMA; www.agingcare.com

Taking Care of Yourself— **Count Your Blessings**

If you woke up this morning with more health than illness...you are more blessed than the million who will not survive this week.

If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation...you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death...you are more blessed than three billion people in the world. If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep...you are richer than 75% of this world.

If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish some place, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful...you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not. If you can read this message, you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read at all.

Have a good day, count your blessings.



Inspiration

Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were.

~Marcel Proust

Live Life Laughing!



Don't Fall – Be Safe

Resist the temptation to walk barefoot or in flipflops in the summer. Our shoes need to stay securely with the foot as we take each step. Seniors should wear sensible, low-heeled shoes that fit well and support the feet. There should be no red pressure marks on feet when shoes and socks are removed.

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Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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***SAFETY TIPS*—Emergency Communication**

Staying in touch with family and friends during an emergency is important. Name an out-of-state friend or relative as the contact person that everyone gets in touch with. Someone outside of the area of the emergency, power outage, or natural disaster will be better able to keep everyone informed as each person “checks in.” Be sure all family members know the phone number. Program the contact person’s phone number into each person’s cell phone speed dial list. List the person as **“ICE” (In Case of Emergency)** in your phone. Emergency personnel will often check ICE listings to reach someone you know. Tell your family and friends that you’ve listed them as emergency contacts.

- ★ Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- ★ Community alert systems will text or e-mail to let you know about weather and emergency conditions.
- ★ Register the person in your care with emergency response providers so they can be located during disasters. To learn more, visit <http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan>

NEXT ISSUE... ELDER ABUSE & NEGLECT