



Help Your Loved One Beat the Heat this Summer

June 2019

Senior Management Services

Summer is a season of fun and family and may very well be your loved one's favorite time of year. Summer means vacations and visits from grandchildren, as well as outdoor activities such as gardening, picnics, and long walks.

In many parts of the country, however, summer temperatures can soar to dangerous levels, particularly for an aging loved one. Older adults are more susceptible to the dangers of heat, as they are less likely to sense and respond to changes in temperature. Their bodies are also less efficient at regulating body temperature, which explains why seniors are often reaching for sweaters while we're turning up the air conditioning. Certain medications may also make it more difficult for your loved one to regulate their temperature or to perspire.

Taking a few precautions during the Summer months can ensure that you and your loved one beat the heat while enjoying all that this season has to offer:

- 1) **Stay hydrated.** Encourage your loved one to drink water throughout the day, rather than waiting until they feel thirsty. When we're thirsty, we're already dehydrated. Eating lots of fresh Summer fruit is a delicious and nutritious way to take in extra fluids.
- 2) **Maintain a cool home.** Keep your home and/or your loved one's home safe and comfortable by running the air conditioning during the hottest parts of the day and by letting in cool air in the early morning and late evening hours. If your loved one needs financial help to keep their home cool, contact the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.
- 3) **Dress appropriately.** Your loved one should dress in lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing, made of natural fabrics, like linen or cotton.
- 4) **Plan the day.** Help your family member plan their daily activities so that they avoid being outside in the hottest periods of the day. For example, encourage them to run errands or work in the garden in the early morning hours, when it's coolest.

If your loved one begins to experience heavy sweating, feels weak, nauseous, and has a fast and weak pulse, these could be signs of heat exhaustion. It's important to move them to a cool location as quickly as possible. Have them lie down and sip cool water while you apply cool, damp cloths to their body.

Heat stroke is a more serious situation characterized by a body temperature above 103 degrees. Your loved one's skin may appear hot and red, their pulse rapid and strong, or they may fall unconscious. Call 911 immediately and move your loved one to a cooler place while applying cool, damp cloths to their skin.

With the proper precautions and planning, your aging loved one can participate in all of the joys of Summer while staying safe and healthy.

Background for this article was referenced from the following locations:

<http://helpinghandswi.com/staying-hydrated/>

[http://www.visitingangels.com/\(X\(1\)\)/top-10-ways-to-help-seniors-to-beat-the-heat-article_45](http://www.visitingangels.com/(X(1))/top-10-ways-to-help-seniors-to-beat-the-heat-article_45)

**For additional information about Eldercare, please contact Quest at
1-800-364-6352**