

Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Summer Storm Emergencies – Hot Weather Safety

Too much heat is not safe for anyone. It is even riskier if you are older or have health problems. It is important to get relief from the heat quickly. More Americans are killed by hot weather than by any other natural disaster.

Heat-Related Illness

Being hot for too long can cause several illnesses, all grouped under the name *hyperthermia*. Your risk of developing heat-related illness increases with the *heat index*, which is a combination of air temperature and humidity. High humidity makes your sweat roll off your skin without evaporating or cooling the body. Wearing too much clothing in warm temperatures also increases your risk of being ill.

Heat illness or *hyperthermia* occurs when there is an unusual increase in core body temperature. Unlike fever, it does not respond to medications. It is therefore extremely important to recognize early symptoms of heat exhaustion.

Older people have an increased risk of developing heat stress because many of them do not have air-conditioning or fans. Some of them may not be aware of *when* to get out of the heat, or they may be physically unable to get out of an overheated home.

Other factors that increase one's risk of heat-related illnesses include *dehydration*, which is common among the elderly, and the use of certain medications such as beta blockers.

Obese individuals, and those with fever, heart disease, poor circulation, mental illness, and sunburn are also at risk.

Use a Buddy System

Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness. People who are 65 or older should have someone check on them twice a day during a *heat wave*.



Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Heat exhaustion is less severe, more common, and occurs when the body becomes severely dehydrated. If left untreated, it leads to heat stroke.

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

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





The Area Agency on Aging sponsors services to support non-paid caregivers of frail older adults who need services to maintain independent living.

If you are a caregiver and need help, contact the **Johnson County Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) Information Specialist** at **913-715-8861**.

The AAA works with community-based organizations to provide services for caregivers. These services are funded under the Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP). There is no fee to the caregiver for these services but donations are appreciated.

FCSP Services may include:

- **Respite Care**
- **Supplemental Services** – These services, attendant/person care, bathroom items, chore, homemaker, flex, repair/maintenance/renovation, transportation, are provided on a limited basis to complement the care provided by the caregivers.
- **Services may also be available for Grandparents or Relative Caregivers.**

HELPFUL WEBSITES:

Johnson County Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)
<http://www.jocogov.org/dept/human-services/area-agency-aging>

Aging & Accessibility Directory
[AAA publications and directories
http://www.jocogov.org/dept/human-services/publications-and-directories/aging-and-accessibility-directory](http://www.jocogov.org/dept/human-services/publications-and-directories/aging-and-accessibility-directory)

AAA Caregiver Support
<http://www.jocogov.org/dept/human-services/area-agency-aging/caregiver-support>

Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS)
www.kdads.ks.gov

Kansas Caregiver Guide
www.kdads.ks.gov/Publications/caregivers/Caregiver_Guide_2009.pdf

Family Caregiver Alliance
www.caregiver.org

National Institute on Aging
www.nia.nih.gov

Hospice Caregiver Information
www.hospicenet.org/html/caregivers.html

Hospice Foundation of America
www.hospicefoundation.org/caregivers

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/caring-for-the-caregiver

death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs of Heat Stroke

- Extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea
- Confusion or unconsciousness

These are signs of a life-threatening emergency.

Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the person by getting him to a shady area and cool him rapidly by immerse him in a cool tub of water or shower; spray him with cool water from a garden hose; sponge him with cool water.

If he is conscious and able to swallow, give cool water or nonalcoholic, decaffeinated beverages.

Source: American Heart Association; Department of Health and Human Services; Caregiving in the Comfort of Home

Emergency Planning

Recovering from a natural disaster tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done *today*.

In addition to the supplies of food, water and first aid kits, consider these precautions:

- ☞ Create a **network of friends and neighbors**. Show everyone how to operate *essential* equipment.
- ☞ List the type and **model numbers of medical devices**, like oxygen tanks and wheelchairs.
- ☞ If the person in your care is in a wheelchair or has **mobility problems**, plan for how they will evacuate.
- ☞ 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**.
- ☞ Know where the first-aid kit and **emergency supplies are located**.
- ☞ Make a **communication plan** with an out-of-state contact so you will know how to contact one another.
- ☞ Designate a **backup provider** in case you can't reach the person in your care.

In an emergency, Alzheimer or dementia patients 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— Stay Hydrated, Stay Safe

Not drinking enough fluids increases the risk of falling. In addition, the dizziness, as a sign of heat exhaustion, can cause a fall.

While being properly hydrated is always important, in summer heat it can be lifesaving. Our natural sense of thirst diminishes with age so it is important to drink water "by the clock," as you would schedule crucial medications. This allows better absorption of nutrients from foods as well as medications, and reduces the risk of dehydration.

Dehydration, especially in the elderly, can increase confusion and muscle weakness and cause nausea. Nausea, in turn, will prevent the person from wanting to eat, thereby causing more dehydration.

Avoid serving caffeine and alcohol, which cause frequent urination and dehydration

Source: NIH News In Health, Department of Health and Human Services; CDC



Inspiration

The best sermons are lived, not preached.

Live Life Laughing!

I keep hitting "escape", but I'm still here!



Memory Care - Alzheimer's and Dehydration

People with Alzheimer's are more likely to experience dehydration. They often forget to drink, have difficulty swallowing, or may not be able to express their needs. Some may avoid taking fluids if they are incontinent. Dehydration is a major reason why many adults suffering from dementia are treated in the emergency room.

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The Aging Network

As a result of 1973 amendments to the 1965 Older Americans Act, federal funding is provided for a network of agencies to coordinate services for the growing population of older Americans. This network includes the federal

Administration for Community Living (ACL), state administrative units on aging, more than 655 nationwide Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), and thousands of community-based senior centers and nutrition sites.

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) is the state administrative unit that oversees the operation of 11 state AAAs. Although most AAAs are private, not-for-profit agencies operating in multiple counties, the Johnson County AAA is a public not-for-profit operating as a unit of Johnson County Human Services.

For detailed information, visit www.jocogov.org/hsd.

Aging and Disability Resource Center

The Area Agency on Aging hosts your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), where people can turn for information, assistance, and a single point of entry to public long-term support programs and benefits. ADRCs provide unbiased, reliable information and options assistance to persons eligible for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) for Frail Elderly, Physical Disabilities and Traumatic Brain Injuries, as well as assessment services for persons considering a move to a nursing facility.



Receive services or be of service. Both are easy!

Begin receiving aging services. To learn more about any of the services provided through the Johnson County AAA, call an aging information specialist at 913-715-8861.

Become a volunteer. Consider joining the network of dedicated volunteers who help senior adults live in the Johnson County community with independence, dignity, and hope. Volunteers may choose activities that meet their interests and time schedules. The AAA's priority volunteer program is Meals on Wheels. Call the coordinator of Volunteer Services at 913-715-8859 to learn more or to become a volunteer.

AAA Programs

- **Aging Information and Assistance.** Aging information specialists provide timely, updated facts about aging issues and services over the phone, through email, or in person by appointment.
- **Publications about Aging.** A variety of print and electronic materials provide important information of interest to senior adults and family caregivers.
- ***The Best Times***, a quarterly newsmagazine, is available to Johnson County residents 60 and older. The Best Times provides vital information about aging services, programs, organizations, activities, and issues. The publication is also available online. Contact 913-715-8930 concerning subscriptions.

Area Agency on Aging

11811 South Sunset Drive, Suite 1300,
Olathe, KS 66061-7056

913-715-8860 phone 913-715-2285 Fax
www.jocogov.org/hsd

AAA Programs

- **Caregiver Support.** Services to support non-paid caregivers of frail older adults who need services to maintain independent living.
- **Homemaker/chore programs.** Ongoing assistance with the upkeep and cleanliness of the home, shopping, and occasional heavy-duty cleaning are available through these programs.
- **Medication management.** Nurses visit private homes regularly to setup medications and monitor their use.
- **Assessment.** An in-home meeting with a potential client to determine needs for services. Additional assistance may be provided to coordinate multiple services if needed.
- **Nutrition Services.** Adults 60 and older in Johnson County have three dining options, based on their needs and preferences. Each meal provides a minimum of one-third of the daily nutritional requirements.

CHAMPSS: A senior dining option to augment meals at Senior Nutrition Centers, CHAMPSS provides greater time flexibility and more extensive menu selections at local grocery stores. Call 913-715-8894 for information regarding enrollment.

Meals on Wheels: Volunteers deliver nutritious meals Monday through Friday to senior adults who are homebound.

Senior Nutrition Centers: Nutritious meals are served at 11:30 a.m. five days a week at six centers. The centers offer friendship, education, fitness, and opportunities for socializing.

De Soto

32905 W. 84th St. 913-585-1762

Gardner

128 E. Park St. 913-856-3471

Lenexa

13425 Walnut St. 913-888-6141

Merriam/Shawnee

5701 Merriam Drive 913-677-2048

Overland Park

8101 Marty St. 913-648-2949

Roeland Park

4850 Rosewood Drive 913-826-3139

Spring Hill

401 N. Madison St. 913-592-3180

- **Legal services.** Seniors receive access to legal consultation and representation, education, and assistance with access to government benefits.
- **Personal care.** Attendants help senior adults with bathing, grooming, and other personal care.
- **Respite care.** An in-home substitute caregiver or adult day care can provide temporary relief for non-paid caregivers.
- A **private pay care management service** is offered through the ADRC. This service assists those who need help in setting up services for seniors in Johnson County.



For information on
programs call
913-715-8861

Caregiver Assistance News

“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

Some medications and heart disease can increase the likelihood of heat stroke. An elderly person may not *feel* the heat as much as a young person would. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. People with Alzheimer’s forget to drink and may not be able to communicate their needs.
T F
2. Muscle cramps are *never* a sign of heat exhaustion.
T F
3. The risk of developing heat-related illness increases with the *heat index*, which is a combination of air temperature and relative humidity.
T F
4. People who are 65 or older do not need to have someone check on them twice a day during a heat wave.
T F
5. Heat illness or hyperthermia occurs when there is an unusual increase in core body temperature.
T F
6. It is extremely important to recognize early symptoms of heat exhaustion which can lead to *heat stroke*.
T F
7. Dehydration and the use of certain medications increase the risk of heat-related illnesses.
T F
8. Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness and is a life-threatening emergency.
T F
9. If the heat stroke victim is conscious and able to swallow, give him cool water or other nonalcoholic drinks or decaffeinated beverages.
T F
10. In an emergency, Alzheimer or dementia patients can sense when something is wrong.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Johnson County Area Agency on Aging
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Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

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

Ordering Info

From the publishers of

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Caregiver Series

available from...

CareTrust Publications LLC
PO Box 10283, Portland, OR 97296
800-565-1533
or www.comfortofhome.com

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SAFETY TIPS—Before a Blackout – Be Prepared

Losing electrical power often means losing more than lights: refrigeration, water supplies, and cell phones all depend on a power supply. If you are *warned* of a coming blackout:

- Keep electricity use as low as possible to help power companies avoid rolling blackouts.
- Fill plastic containers with water and freezer them. Leave about an inch of space inside each one, because water expands as it freezes. This ice will help keep food cold during a power outage.
- Most medication that needs refrigeration can be kept in a closed refrigerator for several hours without a problem. If unsure, check with your physician or pharmacist.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full because gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- Know where the *manual* release lever of the electric garage door opener is located and how to operate it. Garage doors are heavy, so you may need help to lift it. Always keep the garage door key with you.

Source: www.Ready.gov

NEXT ISSUE... EMERGENCIES - IS THE PERSON WITH ALZHEIMER'S IN PAIN