Heat Stroke – Staying Safe

Regardless of where we live on the planet, humans maintain a consistent internal temperature around 98°F in order for our systems to function properly. Sweat is one of the body’s most powerful tools to maintain a safe internal temperature. When the body gets too hot, it begins to sweat to cool itself off. When sweat evaporates into the air, heat from our skin goes with it, cooling us off. If the perspiration is not able to evaporate, the body cannot regulate its temperature. Evaporation is a cooling process. When the atmospheric moisture content (i.e. relative humidity) is high, the rate of evaporation from the body decreases. The body feels warmer in humid conditions. The opposite is true when the relative humidity decreases because the rate of perspiration increases. The body feels cooler in dry conditions.

Seniors and Heat Stress

The elderly and those with long-term medical and mental health conditions are also more vulnerable to heat. The elderly may not have the same warning signs and may not recognize that they are dehydrated until it is too late. Their sweating mechanism weakens, and they may be taking medicines or have a chronic medical condition that interferes with their ability to regulate their temperature and sweat.

Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. If your home doesn’t have air conditioning, locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.

If you have a fan, you can make it work harder for you and cool the room down even further by simply placing a bowl of ice in front of it.

Gel-filled Kool neck ties can make you more comfortable.

Drink more water than usual and don’t wait until you’re thirsty to drink. If your doctor limits the amount of fluids you drink or has you on water pills, ask her how much you should drink during hot weather. Avoid alcohol.

Wear cooler clothing – loose, lightweight, and light-colored clothing.

Cool down with cool showers and baths.

Avoid strenuous activities and get plenty of rest.

Check on neighbors and have someone do the same for you.

Stay informed; check the local news for health and safety updates.

Cool your house with energy-efficient LED lights. Use thick curtains with a white reflective backing for keeping a sun-facing room cool. Don’t use the stove or oven to cook—it will make you and your house hotter.

Source: Heat Stress in Older Adults | Natural Disasters and Severe Weather | CDC; Caregiving in the Comfort of Home; weather.gov
Heat Stroke & Heat Exhaustion

It is important that seniors who are 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.

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

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call 911 while you begin cooling the person:

■ Get him to a cool or 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; pack ice under arms and between legs, 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.

Source: WebMD Health News How Heat Kills: Deadly Weather “Cooking” People From Within; American Heart Association; Department of Health and Human Services; Caregiving in the Comfort of Home
Aging Information…913-715-8861

...Your Key to Aging Services in Johnson County

Johnson County Area Agency on Aging, through Human Services, offers a single point of entry for services. Aging Information Specialists are your starting point for locating resources such as in-home services, congregate and home-delivered meals, transportation, legal assistance, insurance, housing and more. In addition to phone assistance, you can receive resource directories, booklets and brochures via mail to further address your informational needs.

Johnson County Aging Information Specialists have voice mail to take your message when they are on another line. Please be sure to include your phone number when you leave a message. If you don’t hear back, please do not hesitate to call again.

Additional information may be requested when calling in a referral for department-provided services:

➢ Name, address and phone number of the person needing services
➢ Physician and phone number
➢ Emergency contact(s) and phone numbers
➢ Health information - important for assessing needs
➢ A Social Security number to keep multiple records in order
➢ Income and asset information to help determine appropriate services

After an initial intake, an in-home assessment will be arranged to gain further insights regarding needs and resources available.

Our philosophy is client centered. Agency staff visit and talk with each client before services begin. Each call or visit is handled in a confidential and timely manner.

We welcome your calls and the opportunity to assist with your needs.

Simply call (913) 715-8861
(If you reach a recording, please leave your name and phone number)

Visit our website at www.jocogov.org/hsd
Then click on Area Agency on Aging link at left.

AAA programs are funded by the Older Americans Act and state funds through the Kansas Department on Aging, Johnson County government, agency matching funds, and individual participant donation. Johnson County government does not discriminate on the basis of race, color national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with Human Services. (913) 715-8800/Voice or (913) 894-8822/TTY.
Taking Care of Yourself — Insomnia and Depression

Depression in the elderly is often misdiagnosed as dementia or Alzheimer’s and some health care professionals may mistakenly think that depression is normal for the elderly. Seniors are often under-treated for depression and other mental health problems. However, depression can and should be treated when it occurs, since untreated depression can delay recovery or worsen outcomes for other illnesses. Nearly half of all people with depression report trouble sleeping, and people with insomnia are nearly twice as likely to be depressed. Curing insomnia in people with depression could double their chance of a full recovery.

Provide foods high in liquid such as soup and watermelon.

Live Life Laughing!

I understand what you are saying, but I just don’t know what you mean.

Inspiration

You can only go as fast as the slowest part of you can go.
— Bonnie Raitt, Singer

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.
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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Phone</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De Soto</td>
<td>32905 W. 84th St.</td>
<td>913-585-1762</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardner</td>
<td>128 E. Park St.</td>
<td>913-856-3471</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lenexa</td>
<td>13425 Walnut St.</td>
<td>913-888-6141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merriam/Shawnee</td>
<td>6040 Slater St.</td>
<td>913-322-5550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olathe</td>
<td>1425 E College Way</td>
<td>913-782-6131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overland Park 8101</td>
<td>Marty St.</td>
<td>913-826-3139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Hill</td>
<td>401 N. Madison St.</td>
<td>913-592-3180</td>
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- **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.
QUICK QUIZ

Many older people 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. They are in increased risk for heat illness. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Older adults are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.
   T F

2. Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness.
   T F

3. If you sweat too much, your total blood volume is decreased, which means your heart has to pump even harder to get a smaller volume of blood to your working muscles, skin and the other body parts.
   T F

4. If your doctor limits the amount of fluids you drink or has you on water pills, ask her how much you should drink during hot weather.
   T F

5. Heat exhaustion is less severe than heat stroke, and occurs when the body becomes severely dehydrated. If left untreated, it leads to heat stroke.
   T F

6. If your home doesn’t have air conditioning, contact your local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
   T F

7. The body does not feel cooler in dry conditions.
   T F

8. High body temperature (above 103°F); red, hot, dry skin (no sweating); and rapid strong pulse are signs of heat stroke.
   T F

9. Air conditioning is not the best protection against heat-related illness and death.
   T F

10. When perspiration is evaporated off the body, it effectively reduces the body’s temperature.
    T F

Name__________________________________________________________

Signature________________________________________Date________________
Safety Tips—Hot Weather and Heart Disease

The risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke increase when the humidity is above 70 percent and the temperature is above 70° F.

If you sweat too much, your blood volume is decreased. That means your heart has to pump even harder to get this smaller volume of blood to your working muscles, skin and the other body parts. When you lose too much fluid, your body temperature rises, and your nervous system doesn’t work properly. Extreme fluid loss can lead to brain and heart damage.

A good way to monitor your body fluid level is to weigh yourself every morning after using the bathroom. If you weigh two pounds less than normal in the morning, you’re probably dehydrated and need to drink more water.

Know the symptoms of heat exhaustion and heat stroke. If any symptoms appear, stop and cool down immediately by dousing your-self with cold water. You may need to get medical attention. Heat exhaustion can progress quickly to heat stroke, which can kill.

Source: American Heart Association

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