

Super Seniors News *July 2011 Newsletter*

Dear Friends,

This issue of Super Seniors News will be dedicated to heat stress in the elderly and tips for preventing heat-related illness. We will focus on the importance of obtaining adequate fluids and regulating body temperature.

As summer has officially begun, it is the time of year when the weather is really hot, and exposure to excessive heat will be stressful to your body. To protect your health when temperatures are extremely hot, remember to keep cool, use common sense, and drink “extra, extra” fluids.

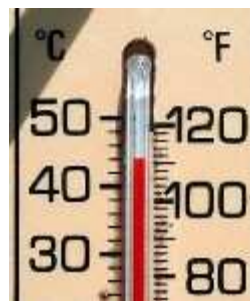
Sincerely,

Jacquelyn W. Gibson

Jacquelyn W. Gibson
Extension Faculty-FCS



“It’s Too Hot” - Information for Older Adults



Did you know that each year more people die from excessive heat events than from hurricanes, lightning, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes combined (Centers for Disease Control)? Anyone can be adversely affected by excessive heat, but older adults are particularly vulnerable. Dur-

ing an average summer approximately 1,500 people die from excessive heat events in the U.S.

Excessive heat events are prolonged periods when temperatures reach 10 degrees Fahrenheit or more above the average high temperature for a region.

Who is at Risk from Extreme heat?

Older adults, as well as young children, are at high risk from excessive heat events. For the growing number of aging Americans, the body’s cooling mechanisms may become impaired. Living alone or being confined to a bed and unable to care for one’s self further increases risk.

Existing health conditions such as chronic illness, mental impairment, and obesity can also increase an individual’s vulnerability. Persons taking certain medication are also susceptible.



How Does Excessive Heat Affect the Body?



The body normally cools itself by increasing blood flow to the skin and perspiring. Heat-related illness and death occur when the body's temperature control system becomes overloaded. When this happens, perspiring may not be enough. High humidity levels can make it even harder for the body to cool itself.

How are Excessive Heat and Heat Stroke Related?

Heat stroke is the most serious health effect of excessive heat events. It is the failure of the body's temperature control system. When the body loses its ability to cool itself, the core body temperature rises rapidly. As a result, heat stroke can cause severe and permanent damage to vital organs. If not treated immediately, heat stroke can result in permanent disability or death.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103° F)
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea



Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion warning signs vary but may include the following:

- Heavy sweating

- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Skin: may be cool and moist
- Pulse rate: fast and weak
- Breathing: fast and shallow



What You Can Do to Protect Yourself

The best defense against excessive heat is prevention. Air-conditioning is one of the best protective factors against heat-related illness and death. Even a few hours a day in air conditioning can greatly reduce the risk. Electric fans may provide comfort, but when temperatures are in the high 90s fans do not prevent heat-related illness.



During excessive heat events, the following prevention strategies can save lives:

- Visit air-conditioned buildings in your community if your home is not air-conditioned. These may include: senior centers, movie theaters, libraries, or shopping malls.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink lots of fluids. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink. If a doctor limits your fluid intake, make sure to ask how much to drink when it's hot. Avoid beverages containing caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar. These drinks cause dehydration.
- Ask your doctor or other health care provider if the medications you take could increase your susceptibility to heat-related illness.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.

- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

Sources: “It’s Too Darn Hot” - Planning for Excessive Heat Events, EPA 100-F-07-025, July 31, 2009

Heat Stress in the Elderly,
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/elderlyheat.asp>

Tips for Drinking More Water:

- T Flavor water with lemon for taste
- T Drink water when you wake up
- T Take each of your medications with a full glass of water
- T Carry a water bottle with you during the day.
- T Drink water before, during and after spending time outdoors.



Cool Alternatives:

Look at the list below for drink ideas to quench your thirst this summer.

- ★ Mix 100% juice with plain or sparkling water.
- ★ Mix unsweetened, decaffeinated iced tea with orange juice or lemonade
- ★ Squeeze a wedge of lemon, lime or orange into unflavored carbonated water.
- ★ Mix 100% juice and water and freeze into fruit juice popsicles.

Are You At Risk for Dehydration?

When we take in less water than we lose, our body becomes dehydrated.

Older adults often are at increased risk for dehydration. The older you are the harder it is to determine when you are thirsty. There are many reasons why you may be at risk. Some of these can be controlled, and some cannot.

Find out if you are at risk for dehydration, and if so, how you can decrease your risk!

	Yes	No
I am older than 85 years.		
I am female,		
I have diabetes, urinary incontinence, or kidney disease		
I have frequent fevers, vomiting, or diarrhea.		
I take laxatives, diuretics, or sedatives.		
I drink less than six cups of fluids each day.		
I often have dark yellow urine.		
I have problems swallowing.		

If you answered “YES” to any of the statements above, you’re likely at higher risk for becoming dehydrated. It’s important to prevent dehydration, because it can lead to health problems. In severe cases, hospital treatment may be needed. Drink small amounts of fluids throughout the day, even if you aren’t thirsty. Try plain or flavored water, fruit juices, low-sodium soups and vegetable juices, diluted sports drinks, and low-fat or fat free (skim) milk. Tea and coffee also can help you stay hydrated.

Symptoms of early or Mild Dehydration Include!

- Flushed face
- Extreme thirst
- Headaches
- Dry skin
- Inability to pass urine or reduced amounts
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Dry mouth
- Muscle cramps



Research has indicated that fluid consumption (especially water) can help prevent certain diseases like kidney stones, salivary gland dysfunction, and

help your kidneys and liver function better by helping them flush out toxins.

How Much Fluids are Needed?

Most elders need to drink 6-8 cups of fluids every day. The amount of fluids you need depends on your calorie needs, activity level, and weather. The average adult loses 10 cups of water daily through perspiration, breathing, and other body functions. When the body is exposed to extremely high temperatures it needs to maintain its normal temperature. When it is hot you will need to drink more fluids and eat more fruits and vegetables so the body won't become dehydrated.



Orange Fizz



3/4 cup frozen Florida Orange Juice Concentrate, thawed
2 1/4 cups carbonated water or tonic water, chilled
ice cubes
Florida Orange slices, quartered (optional)

Pour thawed orange juice concentrate into a pitcher. Gently stir in chilled carbonated water or tonic water. To serve, pour over ice cubes, in glasses. If desired, garnish with quartered orange slices. Serve at once. Makes 4 (6-ounce) servings.

Nutrition facts per serving: 73 cal., 1 g pro., 18 g carbo., 0 g total fat (0 g sat. fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 0 g dietary fiber, 28 mg sodium. Daily Value: 98% vit. C, 1% vit. A, 37% folate, 12% thiamine, 14% potassium.

Florida Department of Citrus

Mock Sangria



Eight 1 1/4-cup servings

25 fl-oz bottle sparkling grape juice
3 cups cranberry-apple juice
10-fl-oz bottle lime-flavored sparkling water
1 orange, with slices cut in half
1 lime, with slices cut in half

Chill all ingredients. Mix all ingredients except fruit slices together. Add fruit slices and mix well. Serve over ice.

For the following shakes and smoothies, blend all ingredients until smooth and creamy. If you use frozen fruit, no ice is needed. Otherwise, blend with 2 ice cubes. Enjoy!

Chocolate Banana Shake

1 cup low-fat milk
1 banana (fresh or frozen)
3 tbsp powdered cocoa



Apple Pie Smoothie

1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
1/4 cup apple juice
1/2 apple
1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

