



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Stay Safe in the Hot Summer Months

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July and August can be two of the hottest months of the year and a good time to offer reminders of how to stay cool during the summer months. In addition, always remember to check on family, friends, neighbors, and those you know who do not have air conditioning when extreme heat is upon us. Older adults are more prone to heat stress than younger individuals, so make sure to take the necessary precautions for yourself or someone in your care during the hot summer months. Make sure they are drinking enough water and have access to air conditioning or a cool shelter.

Here is some good information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) concerning heat stroke and heat exhaustion and what you can do to protect yourself and others:

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke Could Include:

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

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion (a milder former of heat-related illness):

- 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

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the affected person.

What You Can Do to Protect Yourself:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages – drinking water is best. (If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask them how you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold liquids because they can cause cramps.)
- Rest.

- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment.
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

For more information about home and community-based long-term care options in your community, call the Area Agency on Aging District 7 Aging and Disability Resource Center Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm at 1-800-582-7277. A trained social worker or nurse is available to help connect you with resources that can assist you or someone you know with living safely and independently at home.

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