

Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS"

Heat Stroke – Happens Indoors & Outside

Heat stroke is often thought of as a danger only when people are outside in blazing sun. However, extreme heat can be just as dangerous—sometimes even more so—inside the home. During periods of high temperatures, especially when humidity is elevated, indoor environments can quickly become unsafe. For older adults and those with chronic health conditions, the risk of heat-related illness is significant whether they are indoors or outdoors.

Heat Affects the Body

The human body naturally cools itself through sweating. When sweat evaporates from the skin, it lowers body temperature. However, this cooling process depends on environmental conditions. When humidity is high, sweat does not evaporate as efficiently, and the body cannot cool itself effectively. As a result, body temperature can rise quickly.

Indoors, this risk increases when ventilation is poor, air conditioning is unavailable, or appliances generate additional heat. Many people assume staying inside automatically protects them from heat illness—but without proper cooling, indoor temperatures can become just as dangerous as outdoor conditions.

Seniors Are at Greater Risk

Older adults are particularly vulnerable to heat stroke and other heat-related illnesses. As we age, the

body becomes less efficient at regulating temperature. Seniors may not sweat as effectively or may not feel thirsty until dehydration has already begun.

Additional risk factors include:

- **Chronic medical conditions** that affect circulation or body temperature regulation
- **Medications** that interfere with sweating or hydration
- **Limited mobility**, making it difficult to move to cooler environments
- **Cognitive conditions**, such as dementia, that reduce awareness of heat danger

Older adults may also live without air conditioning or may not recognize when indoor temperatures have reached unsafe levels.

Heat Exhaustion vs. Heat Stroke

Heat-related illnesses typically develop in stages. Recognizing early warning signs can prevent a life-threatening emergency.

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body becomes dehydrated and overheated. Symptoms may include:

- Heavy sweating and cold, clammy skin
- Dizziness or fainting



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- Weak, rapid pulse
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fast, shallow breathing

If untreated, **heat exhaustion** can progress to **heat stroke**, which is a medical emergency.

Heat stroke occurs when the body can no longer regulate its temperature. Body temperature may rise to 103°F or higher within minutes. Warning signs include:

- Hot, red, dry skin (often without sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse; throbbing headache
- Confusion, dizziness, or disorientation
- Loss of consciousness

Heat stroke can cause permanent disability or death if not treated immediately.

What to Do in an Emergency

If you suspect heat stroke, act quickly. Call 911 immediately while beginning cooling the person.

- Move the person to a shaded or cool area
- Remove excess clothing
- Cool the body using any available method: a cool bath or shower, spraying with water, or placing cool, wet cloths on the skin
- Fan the person to increase evaporation
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling until temperature drops to about 101–102°F
- If the person is conscious and able to swallow, offer cool (not ice-cold) water

Never delay emergency care—heat stroke is life-threatening.

Preventing Heat Stroke Indoors

Prevention is the most effective way to reduce risk.

- Spend as much time as possible in **air-conditioned spaces**
- Use fans to **circulate air**, but do not rely on them alone during extreme heat
- **Close curtains or blinds**, especially on sun-facing windows
- **Avoid using ovens, stoves, or dryers** during the hottest parts of the day
- Switch to **energy-efficient lighting**, which produces less heat
- Use simple cooling techniques, such as **placing ice in front of a fan**

If your home does not have air conditioning, consider **visiting public cooling centers** or contacting local health services for assistance.

Stay Hydrated

- Drink water regularly—do not wait until you feel thirsty
- Increase fluid intake during hot weather, regardless of activity level

Taking Care of Yourself— Don't Forget to Monitor You Too!

Caregivers play a critical role in preventing heat-related illness—for both the person in their care and themselves. Protecting your own health ensures you can continue to provide safe, effective care. Helpful strategies—

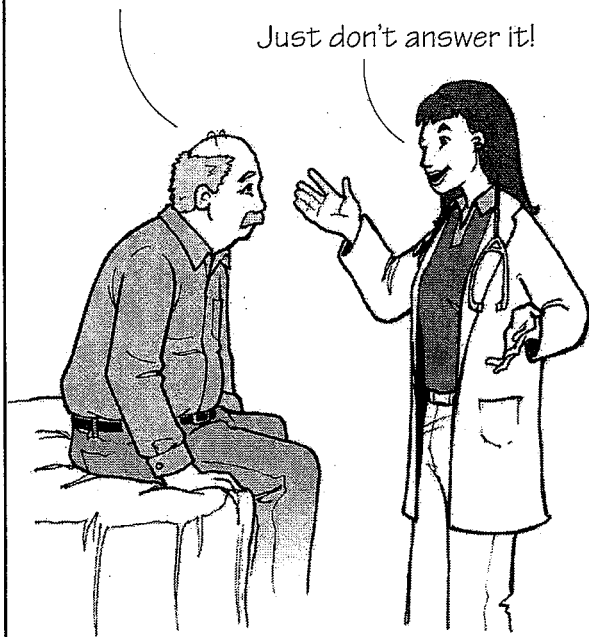
- ◆ Keep track of fluid intake for both of you.
- ◆ Choose foods with high water content, such as fruits, soups, or smoothies.
- ◆ Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and help the person in your care dress appropriately for the heat.
- ◆ Take cool showers or baths and assist the person in your care in doing so safely if needed.
- ◆ Watch for subtle changes in both yourself and the person you're caring for, such as confusion, fatigue, dizziness, or weakness.

Using a buddy system is also important. Check on the person in your care at least twice a day during heat waves, and arrange for someone to check on you as well.

Live Life Laughing!

Doc, I hear ringing in my ears.

Just don't answer it!



Inspiration

We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

—Ronald Reagan

Memory Care - Heat Stroke

Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia can make it hard for a person to know when they are thirsty. Because of this, it is very important for caregivers to watch how much they drink and remind them to drink fluids often.



Alzheimer's Support Group
Second Tuesday of Each Month at 5:30pm
Foltsbrook Center, 104 N. Washington St., Herkimer
Contact: 315-866-6964 x 264

Lucy's Quiet Place
Every Tuesday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Morning Start United Methodist Church
4224 Acme Rd., Frankfort, NY 13340
315-894-4093

Catholic Charities "breathe & rejuvenate"
320 North Prospect St., Herkimer
Crystal Napier – register 315-894-9917 ext 259

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

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Caregiver Series

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***SAFETY TIPS* – Preparing for Power Outages**

Extreme heat is often accompanied by increased demand for electricity, which can lead to power outages. Without power, indoor temperatures can rise rapidly.

To prepare:

- Keep your refrigerator and freezer closed as much as possible
- Store containers of frozen water to help keep food cool
- Have a supply of drinking water readily available
- Keep a list of medications and medical equipment
- Know how to manually operate essential equipment, such as garage doors

Planning ahead can make a critical difference in maintaining safety during emergencies.

NEXT ISSUE...HYGIENE – KEEPS YOU & OTHERS HEALTHY



ALZTOGETHER

Social programs for individuals with Alzheimer's and their care partners

Exploring Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens

Butterflies are among the most beloved pollinators, admired for their vibrant colors and graceful flight. During this program, participants will explore the butterfly house at Parker F. Scripture Botanical Gardens and learn about the fascinating life cycle of butterflies, the native plants that support them, and the important role they play in our ecosystem. Following the introduction, we will take a guided tour through the butterfly house to observe these beautiful insects up close and discover the plants that help them thrive.

Get out, stay active and connect with others in a fun, stimulating environment.

Social engagement activities are a fun and comfortable way for people living with Alzheimer's or other form of dementia and their care partner to get out, get active, and get connected with one another through a variety of social events and community-based activities. Participation is free of charge but reservations are required.

Individuals with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia must be accompanied by a care partner.

This activity is supported, in part, by a grant from the New York State Department of Health.

**Thursday, August 13, 2026
10-11 a.m.**

**Parker F. Scripture Botanical
Gardens and Nature Trail
121 2nd st
Oriskany, NY 13424**

**To Reserve Your Spot:
Call 315.472.4201 x 227**

Space is limited

Advance registration and screening is required

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®

