

Seniors are Prone to Heat-Related Illnesses

All Heat-Related Deaths and Illnesses are preventable, yet each year an average of 658 people die from heat-related conditions.¹

- **Heat-Related Illnesses** result from prolonged exposure to extreme heat overpowering the body's ability to maintain thermal homeostasis (normal balanced body temperature).
- **What factors increase the risk of suffering Heat-Related Illnesses?**
 - Very young age (< 4years)
 - Advanced age (≥ 65 years)
 - Obesity
 - Chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease
 - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
- **IDD Residents** are at higher risk for Heat-Related Illnesses due to potential difficulty communicating distress and more frequent exposure to exacerbating medications such as psychotropic and diuretic drugs.
- **If preventative measures are not implemented**, susceptible patients may suffer from these Heat-Related Illnesses:²
 - Heat Rash
 - Heat Cramps
 - Heat Exhaustion
 - Heat Stroke

Preventative Measures

The following preventative measures should be adopted to minimize the risk to your patients for Heat-Related Illnesses:

- **Be vigilant for failing air conditioning and alert administrators ASAP should ambient air temperatures register outside their norm.**
 - Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death!
- **During periods of extremely hot weather:**
 - Encourage residents to drink adequate water or other fluids.
 - Check their prescribed diet to ensure there are no fluid or electrolyte restrictions!
 - Encourage residents to wear appropriate lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing.
 - Encourage residents to avoid strenuous activities or to delay them until cooler parts of the day.
- **Be familiar with early warning signs for Heat-Related Illnesses, and alert Healthcare Personnel with concerns ASAP. (See next page)**

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES ²	
WHAT TO LOOK FOR	WHAT TO DO
HEAT RASH	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize cool, dry places for resident activities Keep the rash dry Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash
HEAT CRAMPS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy sweating during intense exercise Muscle pain or spasms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stop activity and move resident to a cool place Provide water Wait for cramps to go away before resident resumes physical activity <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cramps last longer than 1 hour Resident is on a low-sodium diet Resident has heart problems
HEAT EXHAUSTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy sweating Cold, pale, and clammy skin Fast, weak pulse Nausea or vomiting Muscle cramps Tiredness or weakness Dizziness Headache Fainting (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move resident to a cool place Loosen patient's clothes Put cool, wet cloths on patient's body or suggest a cool bath Encourage resident to sip water <p>Get medical help right away if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident is throwing up Resident's symptoms get worse Resident's symptoms last longer than 1 hour
HEAT STROKE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High body temperature (103°F or higher) Hot, red, dry, or damp skin Fast, strong pulse Headache Dizziness Nausea Confusion Losing consciousness (passing out) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call 911 right away-heat stroke is a medical emergency Move the resident to a cooler place Help lower the patient's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath Do not give the resident anything to drink

1. Fowler DR, et al. Heat-related deaths after an extreme heat event — four states, 1999–2009. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 2013;62(22):433–436
 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Warning signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. Retrieved 06/24/2021 from: <http://www.cdc.gov/extremehat/warning.html>