



MONMOUTH COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING

Senior NewsLines

Jointly funded by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Division of Aging and Community Services, Department of Health & Senior Services

John A. Wanat, Executive Director

Telephone: 1-877-222-3737

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Older Americans

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but every individual can take important steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies and put plans in place. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan, you can be better prepared for any situation. A commitment to planning today will help you prepare for any emergency situation. Preparing makes sense. Get ready now.

- Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- Plan to make it on your own, at least for a period of time. It's possible that you will not have access to a medical facility or even a drugstore.
- Identify what kind of resources you use on a daily basis and what you might do if they are limited or not available.
- Get an emergency supply kit.
- If you must evacuate, take your pets with you, if possible. However, if you are going to a public shelter, it is important to understand that animals may not be allowed inside.
- Plan in advance for shelter alternatives that will work for both you and your pets; consider loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area who would be willing to host you and your pets in an emergency.

Create a Support Network

- If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster talk to family, friends and others who will be part of your personal support network.
- Write down and share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your support network.
- Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster.
- Make sure that someone in your local network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach those who will help you how to use any lifesaving equipment, administer medicine in case of an emergency.
- Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your network.

Additional Supplies and Documents:

<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/seniors.html>

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Heat-Related Illness Safety Advice from NJ Poison Control Center

Roberta Swenson, MPH

Summer

With summer upon us, the potential for someone developing heat related illness increases significantly. Often referred to as “heatstroke” or “sunstroke”, heat related illness occurs when a person’s body temperature rises to a dangerous level. Factors such as underlying medical problems, dehydration and medication usage all play a role in heat-related illness. Human beings can reduce their body temperature in various ways, the most obvious of which is sweating, other means are: conduction, convection and radiation. On hot, humid days, the increased moisture in the air slows the evaporation of sweat. When sweating is not adequate to cool your body, your temperature rises, and you may become ill. Because most heat-related illness or deaths occur during the summer, people should be aware of who is at greatest risk and what actions should be taken to prevent a heat-related illness. In addition to the elderly, very young, and people with chronic diseases being at risk, certain medications increase one’s risk.

Medications, which increase the risk of developing heat related illness, include but are not limited to:

- Tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline- ElavilR, imipramine- TofranilR, etc)
- Antihistamines (diphenhydramine- BenadrylR, chlorpheniramine- Chlor-TrimetonR)
- Diuretics (furosemide- LasixR, hydrochlorothiazide)
- Antipsychotics (haloperidol- HaldolR)

Tips to prevent heat illness:

- Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting, open-woven clothes.
- Wear a hat in the sun to protect yourself from the sun’s rays. Don’t forget sunscreen!
- Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity.
- Drink extra water (fluids) all day and less tea, coffee, cola and alcoholic beverages! Do NOT wait until you feel thirsty to drink – it may be too late!
- Reduce or schedule outdoor activity, for cooler times of the day, before 10am and after 6pm.
- During outdoor activities, take frequent breaks and drink water or other fluids, even if you don’t feel thirsty.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about how to deal with the heat.

By knowing who is at risk and what prevention measures to take, heat-related illness and death can be prevented. For immediate treatment advice, as well as for prevention information. We are available 24 hours per day, everyday. Call 1-800-222-1222. Trained medical professionals handle all calls. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!



HEAT EXHAUSTION

State of New Jersey
Division of Mental Health Services

This can occur in both active and sedentary individuals. It happens suddenly, and may be quite brief.

A doctor should be called.

Recovery may be spontaneous, or intravenous fluids may be needed to prevent unconsciousness.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion:

- Irritability or change in behavior
- Low or normal temperature
- Slight low blood pressure
- Rapid, full pulse and heartbeat
- Rapid breathing
- Cold, pale skin (may be ashen-gray)
- Profuse perspiration
- Dizziness, headache, and weakness
- Nausea, vomiting
- Cramps in the abdominal area or in the extremities

Treatment

If a person displays symptoms of heat exhaustion, he or she should be:

- Moved to a cooler place as soon as possible
- Given water or other liquids immediately (there is no need for salt)
- Encouraged to rest for a short time



HEAT STROKE

This occurs mostly during heat waves. Persons with chronic illnesses are most vulnerable. Heat stroke, the most serious heat illness, **can lead to death if left untreated.**

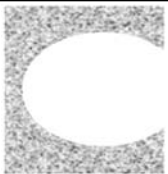
Symptoms of heat stroke:

- Agitation, confusion, seizures, lethargy, or coma (all may be first symptoms)
- High body temperature (102 degrees Fahrenheit or above)
- High blood pressure initially (shock may follow, resulting in low blood pressure)
- Rapid pulse and heartbeat
- Rapid, shallow breathing if person is moving about; slow and deep breathing if the person is still
- Hot, dry, flushed skin

Treatment

As soon as you recognize the signs of heat stroke, take immediate action:

- **Call 911 immediately**
- Loosen or remove outer layers of individual's clothing
- Move to a cool place
- Use CPR if needed
- Replace fluids and sodium only under medical orders



ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS AFFECT BODY HEAT

Antipsychotic medications may impair the body's ability to regulate its own temperature. During hot and humid weather individuals taking antipsychotic medications are at risk of developing excessive body temperature, or hyperthermia, which can be fatal. Individuals with chronic medical conditions are especially vulnerable e.g. heart and pulmonary disease, diabetes and alcoholism, etc.

Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related condition, which is most likely to occur in people who are involved in physical activity outdoors during heat waves.


Heat stroke is a more serious condition of dehydration and salt depletion which can be life threatening.



Nancy Zawicki Office on Aging SHIP (State Health Insurance Program) representative has retired and is moving out of state. Nancy, has been a devoted volunteer and has assisted several hundreds Monmouth County residents with insurance problems since she volunteered her services 5 years ago. Nancy thank you for all your hard work and hours of service to Monmouth County Seniors! Pictured from left to right John Wanat, Executive Director Division of Aging, Disabilities and Veterans' Interment, Barbara Rutan, Director Client Services and Alma Strack, Assistant Executive Director.

Dystonia is a pain
in the neck, foot, shoulder, leg, arm, face..

Imagine having pain, like the killer leg cramp that awakens you, but most of the time in one or many parts of your body. Dystonia is a disorder that affects the nervous system. Improper signaling from the brain causes muscles to tighten and twist involuntarily, forcing areas of the body into awkward movements and positions.



Dystonia patient
Joanna,
of Freehold, NJ,
with actor
Kirk Cameron,
spokesman
for the
Dystonia
Medical Research
Foundation

*Dystonia can be caused by repetitive motions.
If you have pain or spasms and want information,
or if you want to help find the cure, please contact*

Dystonia Medical Research Foundation
www.dystonia-foundation.org
800-377-DYST (3978)

Monmouth County Office on Aging
P.O. Box 1255
21 Main and Court Center
Freehold, NJ 07728

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