



Tips for the Summer Heat and Seniors

Heat is Mother Nature's #1 Killer

Heat kills more people than all other natural killers including hurricanes and tornadoes. Nearly half of all victims are 65 years and older. Consider that many older houses don't have air conditioners that are efficient and because seniors do not feel the heat as much, the elderly are less likely to use their air conditioners. Having and using an air conditioner is no *guarantee* of sufficient cooling because of the risk of rolling blackouts. Add to that, fans are not protective against heat-related illness when the temperature is at least 90 degrees and the humidity is 35% or above.

What are some things the **elderly** should do to protect themselves in this horrible weather?

- Stay hydrated! Drink a lot of **non-alcoholic** and **non-caffeinated** liquid.
- Spend the day in air-conditioned buildings.
- Arrange for transportation to cooling center if necessary.
- Dress in loose-fitting clothes made of light fabrics such as cotton.
- If you *must* be outdoors, stay in shaded areas near trees and/or water.

How can **you** help your aging loved one?

- Check on them at least twice a day. In person is best.
- Encourage consumption of the proper kinds and amounts of fluids.
- If you are a long distance caregiver, have a plan for immediate local help in case of an emergency.
- Transport them for appointments and shopping to avoid waiting outside and walking in the heat.

Five Star communities HAVE measures in place to protect seniors from the Summer Heat

- Have Hydration programs and a recreational calendar full of activities that feature refreshing beverages.
- Have a professional and caring team trained to recognize the symptoms of dehydration and heat stress.
- Have knowledge of urinary track infection symptoms that can occur more frequently when dehydrated.
- Have care options to assist with dressing for the hot weather.
- Have scheduled local transportation.
- Have appropriate air conditioning systems.
- Have frequent interaction with residents that helps to ensure daily checks.
- Have Food and Dining programs that meet the nutritional and hydration needs of seniors.

* Thanks to the Age Wise newsletter for portions of this tip sheet.

HeartFields Assisted Living at Richmond

501 North Allen Avenue
Richmond, VA 23220 * heartfieldsatrichmond.com

804-257-7949