

Beat the heat to avoid heat stroke and other sun safety tips



Picnics, barbeques, and beautiful weather are characteristics of the season we know and love as summer. Eager to soak up some Vitamin D, it can be easy to spend long days in the sunshine, but even that comes with risks.

As we age, many physical changes occur within the body. These changes mean that we sense heat differently and might not necessarily feel hot even when the temperature is high. Brain signaling slows down and our skin thins. This means that there are fewer pores available to produce sweat and the cooling response of evaporation.

Temperature is not the only consideration for extra heat precautions. It's important to know the heat index which is a measure of the combination of heat and humidity, or the 'real feel' outside that can make it feel much hotter. Experts recommend that seniors should take extra precautions when the heat index reaches 91 degrees. For example, a temperature of 85 degrees at 65% humidity rates a heat index of 91 degrees.

It is reported that only about 15% of older adults and 8% of sun-sensitive older adults regularly use all 5 kinds of sun protection. Using these forms of protection can reduce your risk of getting skin cancer.

Other common problems caused by prolonged sun exposure include dehydration, heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and heat syncope.

Dehydration is very common and is signaled by weakness, headache, muscle cramps, dizziness, confusion, and if severe enough, passing out. To avoid dehydration, drink plenty of water and sport drinks containing electrolytes.

Heat stroke is characterized by a dangerous rise in body temperature that can happen gradually over days. Common symptoms include a fast pulse; headache; dizziness; nausea; vomiting; or red, hot, dry skin. If you feel these symptoms, move to a cool, shady place and take off any heavy clothing. If possible, douse yourself with cool water on your wrists, ankles, armpits, and neck.

Heat Exhaustion involves too much heat exposure and dehydration. Signs include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, and fainting. Move to a cool, shady place and drink plenty of fluids if you experience any of these symptoms.

Heat Syncope is fainting caused by high temperatures. Lie down with your feet elevated and drink plenty of water to treat this illness.

Pay attention to the cues your body gives you and remember to take frequent sun breaks. Practicing summer sun safety is a huge part of enjoying the outdoors and safely soaking up every ounce of the summer sun.



For more information call 512-641-8805, email us at contact@caradayhealth.com or visit caradayhealth.com