



## Heat Safety Tips for Older Adults

The **Onondaga County Office for Aging** is making the following recommendations concerning heat safety tips for older adults:

Summer's hot weather can lead to serious heat-related illness, especially for older people and those with chronic illnesses. Hot, humid weather causes the body's temperature to rise, which puts a strain on the heart and blood vessels. Heat stroke or heat exhaustion can result.

**Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness.** It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided. **Warning signs vary but may include the following:** An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F); red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating), rapid, strong pulse; throbbing headache, dizziness, or nausea.

**Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness** that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

**Warning signs vary but may include the following:** Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting, a pulse rate that is fast and weak, or breathing that is fast and shallow.

We encourage everyone in our community to be aware of seniors in their neighborhood and look for signs of heat stroke or heat exhaustion, or that the person may be in need of assistance.

**In the case of a medical emergency call 911 directly.** If you are concerned about the general well-being of an older person contact the Office for Aging and an Aging Services staff person will assess the older person's needs and recommend appropriate services and programs.

During this hot weather it is important for everyone, but especially seniors, to follow the following safety tips:

- Stay indoors or in an air-conditioned place such as a local senior center, mall or library
- Keep draperies and window shades closed
- Try to do household chores early in the morning, before it gets too hot
- Drink plenty of water regularly, even if you're not feeling thirsty
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages
- Dress in loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat
- Avoid too much sunshine and use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF rating

For more information, including a list of **air conditioned senior centers**, please call the Onondaga County Office for Aging at (315) 435-2362 or visit our website:

[www.ongov.net/aging](http://www.ongov.net/aging)