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| **State officials remind older Ohioans that extreme heat *is* severe weather**  |

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| *Older adults are at increased risk for heat-related illness and complications* |

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| Avoid heat-related illnesses: State officials remind older Ohioans that extreme heat is severe weather |

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| **Columbus, Ohio** – Forecasters are predicting high temperatures in the 90s and triple-digit heat indexes around the state over the next several days. The Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Department of Health remind residents that extreme heat should be treated with the same care and preparation as a summer storm. “Our bodies are usually very good at controlling their temperature, but extremely hot conditions over an extended period of time can stress even the most efficient system,” said Dr. Amy Acton, director of the Ohio Department of Health. “Factors that can interfere with a body’s ability to adapt to hot weather include age, obesity, dehydration, heart disease, and medications.”“As we age, we sometimes find that our bodies can’t handle extreme conditions as well as when we were younger,” added Ursel McElroy, director of the Ohio Department of Aging. “Know your limitations and balance activity with measures to help your body stay cool. Check on older loved ones and neighbors regularly, since they are at increased risk for heat-related illness and complications.”To stay cool during extremely hot days, the departments recommend:* Drink plenty of cool, non-alcoholic beverages (avoid extremely cold liquids and beverages with high levels of sugar or caffeine);
* Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing and rest frequently;
* Plan outdoor activities for cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening;
* Take cool baths or showers; and
* Seek an air-conditioned environment, such as a store, restaurant, public library, or a family member’s or neighbor’s home, if the indoor temperature in your home is higher than is comfortable.

The departments also urge Ohioans to learn the warning signs of heat-related illnesses and know what to do if you or an older loved one shows symptoms.* **Heat cramps** are muscle pains and spasms, mostly in the legs, caused by dehydration and exertion. Though not life-threatening, heat cramps can be very painful. To prevent and treat heat cramps, drink plenty of cool, non-alcoholic liquids, rest, and stay in a cool environment.
* **Heat exhaustion** is caused by heavy sweating and results in not enough fluids to support your vital organs. Symptoms include cool, moist, pale, flushed, or red skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and lack of energy. Heat exhaustion is a serious and potentially life-threatening illness, so seek medical attention and take steps to reduce the body temperature and increase hydration. These include moving to a cooler environment; drinking cool, non-alcoholic liquids; loosening or removing clothing; and cooling the body with wet towels or a cool shower or bath.
* **Heat stroke** is a life-threatening condition in which the individual’s body is no longer able to control its own internal temperature. Signs of heat stroke include hot, red, and dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, short breathing; and high fever. Heat stroke can also cause disorientation or strange behavior, which may be more difficult to identify in an individual with dementia. Seek emergency medical attention immediately if you suspect you or a loved one is experiencing heat stroke.

During extreme summer weather, including very hot days, check on older loved ones and neighbors to ensure they are safe and healthy and have the resources to stay that way.* Is the temperature in their home comfortable? Do they have safe means to keep it that way if it stays hot outside?
* Do they need medical attention? Do they appear alert and aware? Have they fallen? Are they staying cool enough? Are they taking their medications as prescribed?
* Do they have safe food and water? Are they eating and drinking regularly?
* Do they have someone to call if they need help?

Your area agency on aging can help older adults locate and access assistance to stay cool during extreme heat. Resources include cooling centers; access to water; assistance with utilities; and more. Call 1-866-4-243-5678 to be connected to the agency serving your community.Ohioans who live in nursing homes can also be at increased risk from extreme heat. The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at the Department of Aging advises family members and concerned friends to call loved ones’ nursing homes to check conditions there and ask how the facility is staffed. Call 1-800-282-1206 for assistance.Visit [www.aging.ohio.gov/safeathome](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0011NtaKaV3G8rTj0kK336wgSsnuDpm6RBObEXB3MxRhWDvyi4m7LTpTIW3xrlVZu4HiawRNs90BStLOFsQqReW-oSnghsGQJ4AbLz5co-LgYNrk7b-MUQjxs8iEJuOSbID6Z0NS7JgJHaGTBRjGOmOZUCvC9_DIqVp&c=PFR35WMrif-XWHW98kvP31ukWWA9RqUl43rY3ijQ8VqT2ixn5Sbwyg==&ch=5ELhymE1-RAI9MgpKPTfgrCrpg6U4LmEt9UaSzgc5NyL2a3PY1AxCA==) for additional tips and resources to prepare for severe weather and other emergencies. **###**Contact: 614-466-6230 |

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