



KEEP YOUR COOL IN THE HEAT

Hot weather can place a dangerous strain on your body, especially on your heart. Heat stress can cause many medical problems. Taking a few precautionary steps against heat stress and learning what resources will be available in the event of a heat wave can mean a more comfortable and safer summer.

Temperatures above 90 degrees, especially when combined with high humidity place a strain on your body. Your chances of getting sick in hot weather are increased by a weak or damaged heart, hypertension, circulatory problems, diabetes, a previous stroke, infection or fever, diarrhea, alcohol consumption, skin disease or sunburn, or being overweight.

Certain prescription drugs can make you much more vulnerable to the heat. If you take medicine for high blood pressure, nervousness, depression, poor circulation or sleeping check with your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

During hot weather, most people feel uncomfortable, and may notice a lack of energy or loss of appetite. These are mild signs, and unless they last a long time, there is no need to be alarmed. Take steps to cool down and you avoid more serious affects of the heat.

However, if you or someone you know experiences any of the following serious signs, bathe with cool water and seek medical advice immediately: dizziness, rapid heartbeat, diarrhea, nausea, throbbing headache, dry skin (no sweating), chest pain, great weakness, and mental changes, breathing problems or cramps.

The Cambridge Council on Aging will serve as the main number for individuals to call for information and assistance in the event of a heat emergency. A staff person will provide information on preventive steps to avoid heat stress and coordinate with available community resources to link you with the assistance you need.

The Cambridge Senior Center, 806 Mass. Ave. and the North Cambridge Senior Center, 2050 Mass Ave. will operate as 'cool shelters' where Cambridge elders are welcome to come and cool off. The Cambridge Senior Center is open Monday 8:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Tuesday – Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Friday 8:30 - Noon and Saturdays 8:30 – 1:00. The North Cambridge Senior Center is open M-F, 8:30 – 5:00. To see if a formal heat emergency has been declared, please contact the Council on Aging at 617-349-6220. If you are a senior, who is low income, and who does not have a fan, and has difficulty affording one, please call and ask for Alicia, Liz or Susan at 617-349-6220. (Seniors, who have received a fan within the last 3 years, will be ineligible, unless circumstances deem it necessary).

Some Heat Wave Tips:

1. Do not jog or perform other strenuous outdoor activities. If you must jog, do it at night when it is cooler.
2. Dress in lightweight, light colored loose fitting clothing.
3. Stay out of the sun, sunlight increases body heat and sunburn prevents the release of body heat.
4. Drink plenty of water and cool non-alcoholic beverages.
5. Do not drink alcoholic beverages or coffee or other beverages with caffeine.
6. Stay indoors and use fans and air conditioners if possible.
7. Eat light food and avoid high protein and high calorie foods as these increase body heat.
8. If someone becomes ill seek medical advice. If a person develops a high temperature and is flushed with dry skin; bathe with cool water and seek medical advice immediately.
9. Blackouts often occur during extremely hot weather. Keep a flashlight with fresh batteries close by. Please remember that candles are a serious fire hazard.
10. Please check on elderly or infirm neighbors to see if they need help.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Fire-Rescue	617-349-4900 or 911
Cambridge Hospital	617-665-1000
Mt Auburn Hospital	617-492-3500