

Help Prevent Heat-Related Illness and Death Among Heat-Vulnerable Clients During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Identifying People at Risk for Heat-Related Illness and Death

People who do not have or use air conditioning and have one or more of the following risk factors:

- Chronic health conditions and/or COVID-19 risk factors* including:
 - Cardiovascular, Coronary Artery Disease, Atrial Fibrillation
 - Renal (Kidney) disease
 - Respiratory Disease, such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
 - Obesity (BMI > 30)
 - Diabetes
 - High Cholesterol
 - Serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder
 - Cognitive or developmental disorder that impairs judgment or self-care, such as dementia
 - Cancer
 - Stroke
- Difficulty thermoregulating or use of medications that can cause dehydration, including:
 - Diuretics, or “water pills”
 - Anticholinergics, such as Cogentin
 - Neuroleptics or anti-psychotic medication, such as Risperdal, Seroquel, and Abilify
 - Drug or alcohol misuse
- Socially isolation or limited physical mobility

Guidance for Staff and Heat-Vulnerable Clients (defined as above)

- Advise clients to increase fluid intake during hot weather. Recommend self-monitoring of hydration for people who have health conditions sensitive to fluid balance or who use medications that can cause dehydration.
- Engage staff to frequently call or otherwise remotely check on heat-vulnerable clients to help them stay cool and well-hydrated before and during hot weather.
- Discuss with clients and staff the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness or exacerbation of chronic medical conditions and provide guidance about when to call 911 or go to an emergency room. Signs and Symptoms of Health-Related Illness*:
 - Heavy sweating
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Weakness
 - Dizziness
 - Headache
 - Loss of Appetite
 - Decreased Energy
 - Loss of Consciousness
- For more information, visit nyc.gov/health/heat.

**Black New Yorkers and older adults (age ≥ 60) are more likely to have a combination of these risk factors due in part to social and economic disparities that contribute to poorer health.*