

## 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
- Social 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](https://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.*