
ElderVoices

Newsletter of the National Indian Council on Aging, Inc.

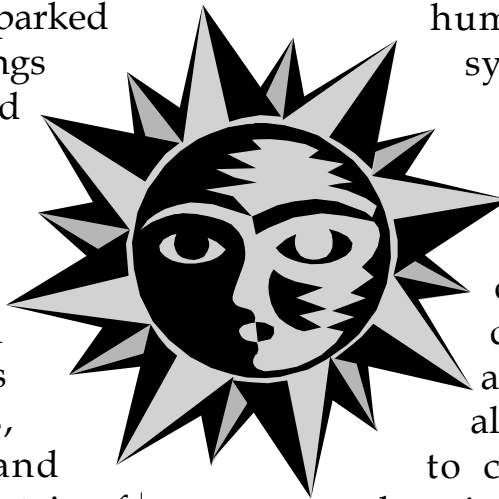
Summer 2001

Preventing Heat Illness

THE HEAT IS ON -- STAY COOL

This hot summer has sparked excessive heat warnings and heat related deaths in some parts of the country. The Centers for Disease Control report that more people die each year from extreme heat than from natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning, floods, and earthquakes. Extreme heat is of special concern to elders and those with medical problems. In addition, energy problems in various areas may limit the use of cooling systems by elders on fixed incomes for fear of exceeding monthly utility bills. This discussion will outline some of the warning signs of heat illness, and offer suggestions for beating the heat.

Elders who live in an area where humidity is a factor should be especially careful of extreme heat. Sweating is the natural way for the body to cool itself, but when extreme temperatures are coupled with



humidity, the body's cooling system is inadequate. High humidity prevents the body from releasing heat, and sweat does not evaporate. In addition, age (elders and children under age 5), heart disease, circulatory problems, and prescription drug use can also decrease the body's ability to cool itself down. A brief description of heat illnesses and treatments follows.

Heat Illnesses

Heat stroke is the most extreme heat illness, and is the most likely to cause heat related death if immediate treatment is not given. Some of the warning signs of heat stroke are:

- Extremely high body temperature (103° +)
- Red, hot, dry skin with no sweat
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

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If someone has any of these symptoms, call for medical assistance immediately. In the meantime, get the victim to a cool area. Immerse the victim in cool water or a cool shower. If that is not possible, spray him with cool water from a garden hose or sponge him with

cool water. If emergency medical personnel are delayed, someone should call the emergency room, explain the situation and ask for further instructions.

A milder case of heat illness is heat exhaustion. This can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures coupled with not drinking enough liquids. Elders are particularly vulnerable to heat exhaustion.

Symptoms include:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting



Skin may also feel cool or moist, pulse rates feel fast and weak, and breathing may be fast and shallow. Treat these symptoms immediately to avoid developing heat stroke. Try resting for a while, taking a cool shower, or finding an air-conditioned place to cool off. If symptoms worsen or last longer than an hour, seek medical attention immediately.

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Less serious heat illnesses include heat cramps and heat rash. Heat cramps are caused by lack of salt and moisture in the body due to increased sweating. Elders with heart problems or who are on a low-sodium diet should seek medical attention for heat cramps. Heat rash can also be a problem caused by hot, humid weather. The best way to deal with heat rash is to cool off as much as possible, and to keep the rash dry. Dusting powder can help, but elders should avoid applying ointments or creams as these will keep the area warm and moist, and possibly make the rash worse.



Prevention

Since controlling the weather is out of the question, the best way to manage heat illness is to prevent it. Here are some tips:

- Drink more fluids, regardless of activity level. Elders taking water pills or who are only allowed limited fluids should call the doctor and ask how much water to drink during hot spells.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, or sugary drinks because these will cause loss of body fluid. Also, very cold drinks are not good for the body on a hot day because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Stay inside, and if possible, find an air-conditioned place to spend some time on a hot day, like a library, movie theater, or store. Just a few hours in an air-conditioned building on a hot day can help the body stay cooler.
- Fans will not prevent heat illness. Take a cool shower or bath if an air-conditioned sanctuary is unavailable.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave anyone (including pets) in a closed, parked vehicle.

Finally, take care of family and friends by sharing this article. Check on elders regularly, especially those with health problems, during extreme heat waves.

Calendar

September 12-14, 2001. Working Together for Diabetes Prevention: Exploring the Benefits and Challenges of Participatory Research Conference. The National Diabetes Prevention Center Southwest will sponsor its third annual conference in Gallup, New Mexico. For more information contact Laura Kesselman at (505) 266-0552.

VISIT WWW.NICOA.ORG

Is Your House a Hazard?



Home can be a very dangerous place because of everyday hazards. Fortunately, quick fixes can prevent injuries at home. The Consumer Product Safety Commission provides a "Safety for Older Consumers Home Safety Checklist." Since the complete checklist is long, only a few items of the checklist are listed here, with more to follow in future newsletters. If you would like the complete checklist, call the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772. Save these checklist items, and re-check the safety of your home on a regular basis.

CORD CHECK!

QUESTION: Are lamp, extension, and telephone cords placed out of the flow of traffic?

YES____ NO____

RECOMMENDATION: Cords stretched across walkways may cause someone to trip.

- Arrange furniture so that outlets are available for lamps and appliances without use of an extension cord.
- If you must use an extension cord, place it on the floor against a wall where people cannot trip over it.
- Move the phone so that telephone cords will not lie where people walk.

QUESTION: Are cords out from beneath furniture and rugs or carpeting?

YES____ NO____

RECOMMENDATION: Furniture resting on cords can damage them, creating fire and shock hazards. Electric cords that run under carpeting can cause a fire.

- Remove cords from under furniture or carpeting.
- Replace damaged or frayed cords.

QUESTION: are cords attached to the walls, baseboards, etc., with nails or staples?

YES____ NO____

RECOMMENDATION: Nails or staples can damage cords, presenting fire and shock hazards.

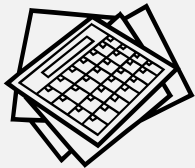
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- Remove nails, staples, etc.
 - Check wiring for damage
 - Use tape to attach cords to walls or floors

QUESTION: Are electrical cords in good condition, not frayed or cracked?
YES_____ NO_____

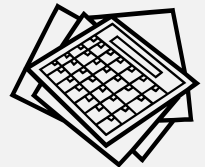
RECOMMENDATION: Damaged cords may cause a shock or fire.
■ Replace frayed or cracked cords.

QUESTION: Do extension cords carry more than their proper load, as indicated by the ratings labeled on the cord and appliance?
YES_____ NO_____

RECOMMENDATION: Overloaded extension cords may cause fires. Standard 18 gauge extension cords can carry 1250 watts.
■ If the rating on the cord is exceeded because of the power requirements of one or more appliances being used on the cord, change the cord to a higher rated one or unplug some appliances.
■ If an extension cord is needed, use one having a sufficient amp or wattage rating.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
NICOA Conference 2002
Albuquerque, New Mexico
September 4-6



HEALING OUR SPIRITS,
HEALING OURSELVES,
HEALING OUR WORLD

Watch for more information in upcoming newsletters!

Here is a quick casserole recipe, perfect for feasts and potlucks!

SPINACH CASSEROLE

Break 4 eggs in a mixing bowl.

Add in:

1 Cup milk

2 Tb. Onion

1 Tb. Worcestershire Sauce

1 Tsp. Salt

Combine:

1 lb. Grated sharp cheddar cheese

1 pkg. Frozen spinach, cooked and drained

4 cups cooked rice

4 Tb. Melted butter

Fold into liquid mixture, place in greased casserole dish. Place dish in pan of water and bake at 375 for 35 minutes or less.

Makes 8-10 Servings



HAPPY GRANDPARENTS DAY!

SEPTEMBER 9, 2001

Every day is grandparents day in Indian Country. We would be lost without you. Here are some activities to share with your grandchildren or other young relatives:

-Start a memory album or tell your grandchild a funny family story.

-Teach your grandchild a craft, or ask them to teach you one.

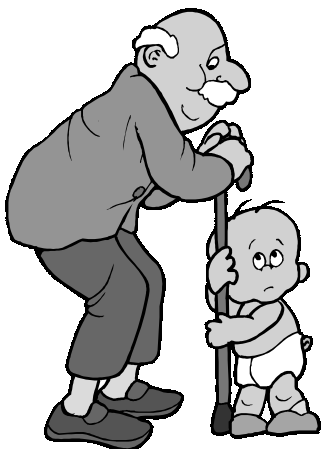
-Make up a story together.

-Play a game together.

-Teach your grandchildren a song.

-Take your grandchildren to the movies.

-Color or draw together.



Do you know someone who would like to join NICOA?

Would your tribe benefit from NICOA membership?

If so, have them apply for membership today!

Membership benefits include:

-Quarterly Newsletter

-Legislative Updates

-NICOA Conference Information

-Educational Materials

**NICOA Membership Application
for new members only!**

Complete form and mail to: NICOA Membership

10501 Montgomery Blvd. NE, Suite 210

Albuquerque, NM 87111

Name: (Please Print) _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Tribal Affiliation: _____ **Date of Birth:** _____

Tribal Roll or Census #: _____

Membership type: (please check one)

[] **VOTING MEMBER** (\$10): Qualified voting members are any Indian 55 years of age or older who is an enrolled "member of an Indian tribe, band or combination of tribes and bands, recognized by the United States Department of the Interior."

[] **ASSOCIATE MEMBER** (\$40): Any Indian under age 55, or non-Indian individual may become a non-voting associate member of NICOA upon payment of dues.

[] **ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER** (\$100): Any organization (including tribes) may become a non-voting organizational member of NICOA upon payment of dues.

PAYMENT ENCLOSED: Check # _____ Money Order # _____ Cash _____

FOR VOTING MEMBERS ONLY

Copy of Tribal Roll/Census # Attached? [] YES [] NO

Please attach a copy for proof of enrollment. Fill out the following if a copy is not available.

I hereby attest that (print name) _____ is a member of the
(tribe) _____ of (state) _____.

Enrollment # _____

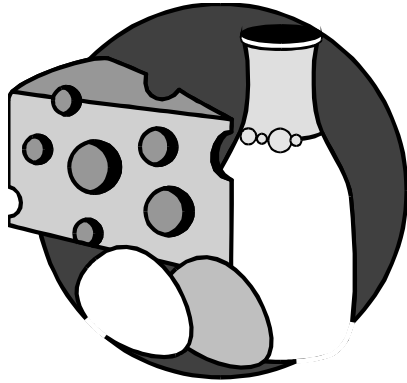
Certified by _____ Title _____

Do Dairy Products Make You Sick?

You may be lactose intolerant if eating dairy foods gives you stomach discomfort. Lactose intolerance occurs when your body has trouble digesting

lactose, a form of sugar found in dairy products. The most common problem associated with lactose intolerance are nausea, gas, diarrhea, or

cramps that occur after eating dairy products. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), up to 75% of all adult Native Americans are lactose intolerant.



It is very important to eat calcium rich foods, especially if you are unable to digest dairy products. Here are some eating tips for the lactose intolerant:

- Some dairy foods, such as hard cheeses, yogurt, and cultured buttermilk contain less lactose than milk. Lactose intolerant people may be able to eat small amounts of these foods.
- Most lactose intolerant people are able to digest small amount of dairy products. Try small servings to find an amount that agrees with you.
- If you want to drink milk, try drinking small amounts with food. There are special brands of milk that have been treated to reduce lactose content, as well as tablets that can be taken before eating dairy products.

Milk and dairy foods are an important part of a healthy diet. They provide calcium and other important nutrients. If you are able to include some dairy products in your diet, choose low-fat milk, yogurt, and ice milk. If you think you are lactose intolerant, please see your doctor and ask for more advice.

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