Things you can do to protect your loved ones during heat waves.
Be Prepared: Know what to do BEFORE a heat wave strikes.

HEAT STROKE IS A SERIOUS HEALTH RISK BUT IS PREVENTABLE:
Watch for early signs of heat related illnesses
and prevent more serious impacts

- **EARLY:** increased sweating, muscle cramps.
- **HEAT EXHAUSTION:** heavy sweating, thirst, decreased urine output, fatigue, headache, nausea or vomiting, cold, clammy skin, dizziness or fainting.
- **HEAT STROKE/SEvere:** throbbing headache, fast, strong pulse, hot, flushed dry skin (skin may be damp) possible confusion and loss consciousness (passing out)
  
  **REQUIRES URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, CALL 911**

HELP PROTECT THOSE AT GREATEST RISK:

- Check on elderly, disabled, or medically ill family members or neighbors regularly. Make sure they are drinking lots of water, are dressed in loose clothing and are alert. Call for assistance if needed.
- Children and infants are particularly vulnerable and should be kept out of the heat, never left in cars and watched for early signs of heat stress. Children should not participate in strenuous athletic events during extreme heat periods. Parents and caregivers should encourage children to drink a lot of water.
- Pets should be monitored, protected from exposure and given extra water.
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS:

- MENTALLY ILL INDIVIDUALS AND THOSE WITH SUBSTANCE USE BEHAVIORS: due to the nature of their illnesses and symptoms, severely mentally ill with psychotic disorders and/or depression are especially vulnerable and may have difficulties in monitoring and caring for themselves

- ELDERLY, ESPECIALLY FRAIL AND CHRONICALLY ILL: Cooling mechanisms of sweating less effective for elderly. Medications and illness make risks more significant

- YOUNG CHILDREN: due to their smaller size and lower fluid volume, infants and young children can easily become dehydrated; children spend more time outdoors

- PREGNANT WOMEN: Greater risk of body heat increases due to additional fluid and weigh. Risk of complications to pregnancy

- LOW INCOME GROUPS: Substandard housing and lack of air conditioning. Pressure to continue to work in outdoor exposed areas

- HOMELESS POPULATION: Greater exposure to weather extremes and lack of ability to find protections; homeless mentally ill have combined stresses of illness, lack of standard housing and poverty
SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS: TIPS FOR STAYING COOL AND AVOIDING OVERHEATING:

- ENCOURAGE DRINKING lots of water before thirst! Staying well hydrated is key to avoiding overheating. Do not wait until the person is thirsty.

- STAY out of the heat/Seek adequate shelter:
  - If available, stay in air-conditioned places
  - Know cool places to go. Libraries, malls, movie theaters, air-conditioned coffee shops may be good places
  - Your community may have cooling centers, contact your public health department or health providers for resources
  - Do not stay in overheated apartments or rooms with no ventilation. In very severe heat (over 90 to 95 degrees F, fans blow hot air and may not be protective). Find alternate cool places

- DRESS in light loose cotton clothing. Do not wear layers or jackets. If outside, find shade and wear wide brimmed hat

- ASSIST WITH COOL SHOWERS or apply cool wet wash clothes to face, neck and arms

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

- Keep your cool in hot weather
- Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness
- Emergency preparedness and response – frequently asked questions (FAQ) about extreme heat

climatepsychiatry.org