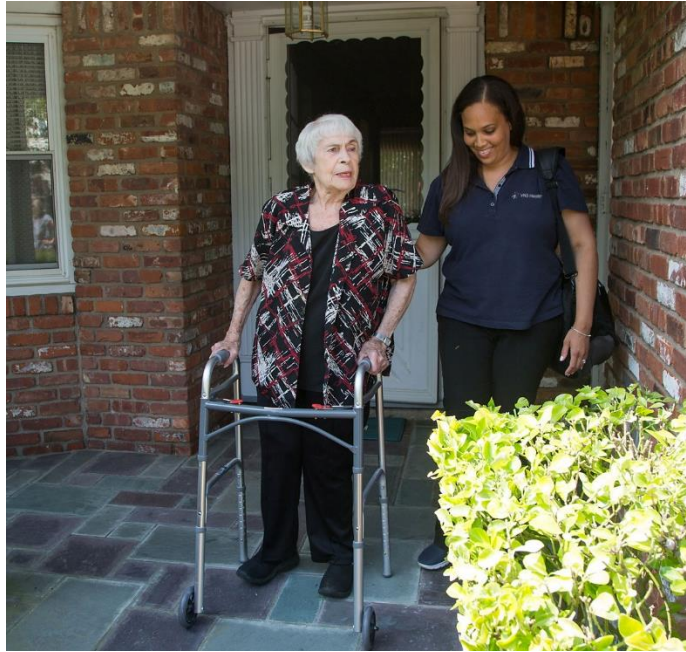


MANHATTAN VOICE

Simple tips for beating the heat and keeping our loved ones, neighbors safe



By Chandra Wilson, July 27, 2022

HEALTH - Across the country, Americans are experiencing record heat waves. In fact, what was once seen as extraordinary weather is [becoming the new normal](#). Whatever the reason, as prolonged heat waves become more common, it's important to have plans and tools in place for beating the heat. Adults 65 years and older and people with chronic health conditions are especially vulnerable to hot weather, even over short periods of time. As people age, their ability to retain water and adapt quickly to temperature changes decreases, which means higher temperatures are more likely to put seniors at risk.

With that in mind, here are a few tried-and-true [tips recommended by experts like the New York City Department of Emergency Management](#) and others, to help you and your loved ones stay safe during the summer.

- **Water, water everywhere!** [Staying hydrated](#) is one of the simplest ways to keep your temperature regulated. Not all liquids are equal, however, as some beverages containing caffeine, like tea, soda or coffee, can dehydrate you further. Experts recommend aiming for 6 to 8 glasses of water a day—but that doesn't mean you have to spend all day attached to a water bottle! There are also lots of [foods](#) that contain high amounts of water and can help stave off dehydration, such as fruits, vegetables, Jello, and ice pops. During hot weather, a natural response for some is to feel less hungry, but it is important to keep up an appetite. Look for foods with high-water content or dishes that can be served cold to keep you hydrated and prevent overheating.
- **Cool down:** While taking a cool shower or bath is a surefire way to bring down your body temperature, it can be challenging to do this multiple times a day, especially for those with mobility issues. Simply keeping a cool damp cloth nearby or putting your feet in a bowl of cold or iced water is a simple way to lower body temperature quickly. Another tip to keep in mind is that metal items, from walkers and canes to city benches, warm up especially quickly in hot weather.

- **Seek out cool places.** [In New York City](#), the tall buildings, pavement, and lack of tree cover can make the weather feel even hotter than it is, and in many homes, air conditioning or fans may not be able to cool down the whole home. If a loved one has trouble keeping their home cool, [the city offers a list of cooling centers during heat advisories](#) where people can go if they need to move somewhere more comfortable on hot days. These include libraries, senior centers and other locations. In case of emergency, you should also be sure you have a plan in place for a loved one to get to a police or fire station, hospital, or pharmacy. Areas that have more tree cover tend to be cooler as well, so if a you or a loved one do need to go out in the heat, try and plan routes that stick to shade and tree cover. The same is true of areas near water, if you're able to relocate to a spot by a lake or ocean,
- **Take a siesta!** There's a reason why many cultures around the world take a break in the midday, since the hottest hours of the day tend to be between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. While some tasks are unavoidable, try to schedule outings or prolonged journeys for early in the morning or late in the day. In addition, it can be helpful to avoid cooking or excessive exercise during these midday hours. When going outside at times of peak temperature, be sure to bring a hat, sunscreen, and loose, light-colored clothing to further stave off the heat.

While rising temperatures are bound to happen, you can ease your worries by having plans and remedies in place to preemptively beat the heat. Particularly when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable in the community, proactive planning is the surest way to keep our family, loved ones and neighbors safe.

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