

the beat



Summertime and the elderly

The summertime is an enjoyable time for everyone. Unfortunately, some of us forget to think about the associated risks that come along with the sun and heat. Below is a list of the top health risks to the elderly during the summer season that will help you care for your clients!

HEAT STROKE

One of the most common causes of health risk to seniors is heat stroke. The symptoms may mimic those of a heart attack but include, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, weakness, headache, muscle cramps and aches, and dizziness.

DEHYDRATION

Another leading health risk among this age group is dehydration, as we age our body loses water. Dry mouth becomes something the elderly get used to. Lack of hydration can lead to serious illness and disease.

FOOD POISONING

Tons of cases of food poison occur every year especially around the summer time. These are situations where food may be left unrefrigerated too long or food preparation techniques are not clean. Food poisoning often occurs from eating undercooked meats, dairy products, or food containing mayonnaise (like coleslaw or potato salad) that have sat out too long.

WATER RECREATION

As the temperature rises outside we tend to merge to the pool where seniors face many health risk, due to the possibility of drowning and or acquiring social diseases, bacteria and parasites. As we age our bodies can become weaker and swimming can

take a toll, if you or a loved one decide to take a swim take notice if you/they are out of breath and or feeling tired, if so take a break. Be sure to shower before entering a pool and out of a pool.

VACATION/DAY TRIPS

Elderly as more prone to skin rashes or reaction due to a lower immunity, having low resistance can put you at great risk. Especially if you visit the woodlands be careful as not to fall on those steep mountains and trails or get too close to the greenery unless you are sure its not poisonous or it can cause a severe reaction.

INSECTS

On your travels or even at home in summer more bugs tend to come out, more notably the mosquito which can cause serious neurological illness for the elderly. Due to it carrying the west Nile virus.

WEATHER

Although avoiding severe weather can seem like common sense an onset of bad weather can be unpredictable. Be sure to plan ahead.

SUN

Although generally sun bathing for a short period in elderly can be helpful to build up vitamin D it can also be harmful, as it might lead to certain types of skin cancer, Avoid long exposure to the sun, and apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before heading outside.

the Motivation factor



Motivation as a concept is often difficult to define, but is frequently used in discussions by health care professionals and staff in regard to physical rehabilitation and exercise.

Health care professionals and family and friends of patients will regularly comment on what they consider to be a lack of motivation or drive in their patient or loved one. Comments may include “he/she is just not motivated to come for therapy today,” and “he/she just won’t get out of bed.” Rehabilitation providers may lament on how to get their patients motivated to exercise or, just as important, how to encourage their patients to adhere to an established exercise program.

It is an implied belief among health care professionals that motivation plays an important role in predicting the outcome of treatment. Those highly motivated are determined to do well in rehabilitation, whereas those who are not as motivated would be determined

to be less successful. The act of being motivated or inspiring motivation in patients and clients of all ages and genders then becomes a driving force behind providing quality care.

INCREASING MOTIVATION

It is known that individuals will act and perform an activity if they deem that activity important to them. Therefore, to increase motivation, it is essential for health care providers to maximize activities determined to be meaningful and valuable to a particular individual. In addition, minimizing negative factors, such as low self-efficacy, decreased knowledge about their injury or illness, decreased competence, and a sense of powerlessness, is also key to increasing motivation in the elderly population in regard to rehabilitation. These factors, along with the factors that increase self-efficacy, will contribute to increasing motivation in the geriatric patient.

Members of the rehabilitation team should encourage each patient to take the initiative in their rehabilitation. Promotion of engagement and active participation will decrease the feeling of powerlessness that often accompanies aging. This, in conjunction with increasing the elderly patient’s sense of competence by having him or her take responsibility for their progress and by having the patient engage in self-challenging, problem-insight behavior, will go a long way in promoting increased motivation. It has been found that increasing the elderly patient’s knowledge about rehabilitation issues and injuries, as well as tapping into any prior experience that they may have had in the rehabilitation process, often will encourage the patient to see themselves as “experts” in their own care. Contrary to popular belief, older individuals are often anxious to get back to their way of life. This want or need will often encourage individuals to do whatever is required so as to return to their previous life. Another factor mentioned by older individuals that helped to increase their motivation was humor. Humor helps to relieve the tension and stress often associated with the rehabilitation process. Of course, the health care professional should always be aware of establishing appropriate rapport and maintaining safe boundaries when incorporating humor into their treatment sessions.

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