



Health Care Alert

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PROVIDING TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS IN ACCESSING HEALTH CARE THROUGH THE MANAGED CARE SYSTEM

Dehydration

What is dehydration?

Dehydration happens when a person loses more fluids than he or she takes in. Dehydration can be caused by losing too much fluid, not drinking enough water or fluids, or both.

What are the causes of dehydration?

There are multiple causes of dehydration. A few of them are listed below:

- Vomiting and/or diarrhea from a stomach virus or other reason.
- Excessive sweating related to increased exercise and/or high external temperatures.
- Fever
- Excessive urination such as with diabetes.

What are the signs of dehydration?

- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Having a dry or sticky mouth

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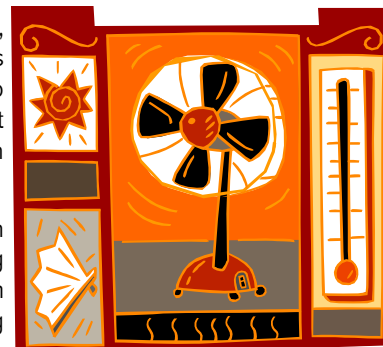


Risk Management Corner Heat Safety Policy

"It's that time of year again!"

Yes, we mean sunscreen, but also heat safety. It is everyone's responsibility to understand the risks of heat related illness and prevention strategies.

Agency staff have an important role in preventing illness or even death from summer heat by implementing preventative measures, understanding which individuals are at highest risk, recognizing symptoms, and obtaining medical attention swiftly when symptoms occur.



What is heat related illness?

Heat-related illnesses occur when the heat level in the body exceeds the amount that your body can normally release, or when there is impaired ability by the body for heat loss. Heat-related illness can vary from mild weakness, dizziness and fatigue; heat cramps; heat edema; heat syncope (fainting); and heat exhaustion; to the life threatening conditions of heat stroke, and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS).

The progression from mild symptoms to heat exhaustion to heat stroke can be quite rapid. Early recognition of symptoms and prompt treatment is critical. By recognizing which individuals are at risk, observing environmental conditions, taking preventative measures, e.g. ensuring the consumption of appropriate fluids, knowing the symptoms and swift actions to take, heat-related illness can be minimized.

Who is at greatest risk for heat-related illness?

Consumers at greatest risk for heat-related illness are those who are taking a variety of medications, including neuroleptic medication (especially antipsychotic medications, tranquilizers, and even antidepressant medications). Other risk factors include age (young and elderly); medical conditions such as high blood pressure; abuse substances; agitation and, increased psychomotor activity; lack of air conditioning or proper ventilation for heat & humidity; living in urban settings on upper floors of residences; and wearing heavy clothing.

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Save the Date!!!

SEPTEMBER 21, 2006
FROM 10:00 AM TO 3:00 PM

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care
is having a

Stay Healthy Fair

AT
The Valley Forge Scanticon
Hotel & Conference Center

There will be many "interactive" sessions and activities geared towards promoting "healthy lifestyles" for individuals and their caregivers.

The information presented to you is to increase your awareness of health conditions. It is not intended to replace medical advice. Please seek the advice of a physician for any health related concerns.

You responded
and
we heard you!
The message is clear!

The results of the CLA Nursing Survey indicated your interest in coming together to discuss and prioritize the various roles and responsibilities of nurses who work in CLA programs across the SE Region:

All CLA nurses will be invited to attend a “pre-forum” meeting on October 11, 2006

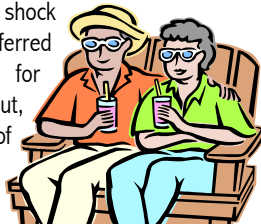
The “Nursing Forum” is tentatively scheduled for December 11th and December 12th, 2006

Look for more information to follow regarding dates, times and location.

Risk Management (continued from front)

Why are drinking fluids so important?

Heat exhaustion is described as a form of shock due to loss of fluid in the body, commonly referred to as “dehydration.” Early symptoms for dehydration include lowered urine output, tiredness, anxiety and irritability. Symptoms of severe dehydration may include uncoordinated gait and spastic muscle movement as well as altered consciousness.



During times when people are at risk of becoming dehydrated, they should be encouraged to increase consumption of non-diuretic beverages. Drinking of non-diuretic fluids needs to occur before a person experiences thirst, since people may not become thirsty until they have already lost 1.5 to 2 liters of fluid. Non-diuretic fluids are non-alcoholic, non-carbonated, caffeine-free beverages such as water and juice.

Note: Persons who (1) have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, (2) are on fluid restrictive diets, or (3) have problems with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their fluid consumption.

***All of the information cited in this article can be found in the City of Philadelphia's Heat Safety Policy distributed April 27, 2006 by Dr. Arthur Evans, Director, Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services and Dr. Peg Minehart, Medical Director, Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services.*

Dehydration (continued from front)

- Complaining of a headache
- Thirst (late stage)
- Less urine or very dark urine (for people that use a diaper, they would use fewer of them)
- Increased heart rate (late stage)
- Lethargy, confusion, or change in mental sharpness (late stage)



Who is at most risk for dehydration?

- People who are unable to control their own intake of fluid such as people who receive their nutrition through g-tubes.
- People that have chronically low fluid levels such as those on diuretic treatment for high blood pressure or congestive heart failure.
- People that are refusing to eat or drink or are eating and drinking less than they usually do.

How do you prevent dehydration?

- If the weather is hot, dress coolly, stay indoors, use the air conditioner and drink lots of extra fluid.
- If you must go outside and the weather is hot, dress in light loose clothing, stay in the shade, and drink lots of extra fluid.
- If you are sick, then drink small sips of extra fluid.
- If you have a g-tube, then talk to your health care provider about how much extra fluid is needed.
- Do not wait for signs of dehydration to begin drinking extra fluid in any of the above situations.

Contact your health care practitioner

- If any of the signs of dehydration are present
- If you need further guidance about increasing fluid intake in situations with increased fluid loss or poor intake of fluid.

July 17, 2006, Health Alert, Office of Mental Retardation, Office of the Medical Director.

FYI!

There are no co-pays for Mental Health Services covered by Keystone 65 Complete.

Please call PCHC and let a HCTA know if you have been charged by any service providers. PCHC will pass along the information to the Special Needs Unit for Keystone 65 Complete.



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

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PCHC is a core program of PMHCC, Inc.