

SINAI HEALTH LINK is

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# HEALTH *Link*

**1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)**

## Keep cool in Chicago's heat

**N**o one can control the weather, but we *can* prepare for Chicago's extreme heat. Summers here can get very hot. And that can be *very* dangerous for some people.

Elderly people are most likely to get sick from the heat. Their body's cooling system doesn't work as well because they don't sweat as much as younger people. They don't feel thirsty or uncomfortable. So they may not take care of themselves when it's hot and humid.



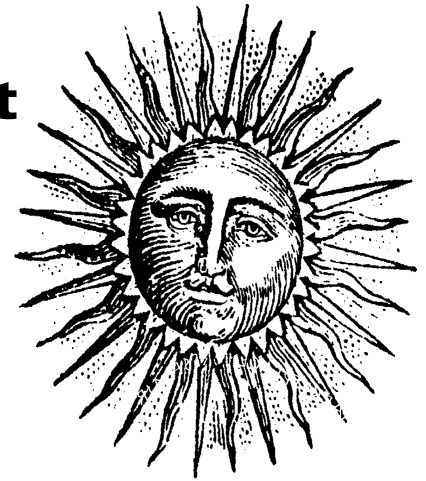
Living alone can be a problem, too. Even if they have air conditioning, many older people save money by not using it. Others sleep with windows closed for fear of crime. And it's harder for people living alone to get help when they get sick. Often, they don't even realize they are sick.

"Some health problems increase the chance of getting sick during hot weather," says Les Zun, MD, chairman of emergency medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital. "Heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure can put an older person at greater risk. So can problems with the thyroid gland, kidneys, lungs or skin. Some medicines also make heat-related problems more likely."

People with alcohol or drug problems are also at higher risk of getting sick or even dying

during severe heat, Dr. Zun says.

Mount Sinai is always ready to care for people in crisis, including those affected by extreme heat. So is the city of Chicago. During heat emergencies, cooling centers are opened throughout the city. Call 311 to find one.



But a heat emergency is also time for community action. Here's what *you* can do:

- Check on elderly neighbors or those with medical problems. If you can't, call the city's 311 line for help.

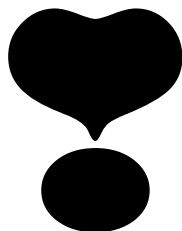


- Call older relatives who live far away. Make sure they are keeping cool and are drinking plenty of fluids.

- Do elderly neighbors or relatives seem confused, weak or crabby? Do they complain of muscle aches, fever or nausea? If so, get them to a doctor fast.

- If someone has convulsions, or even a brief fainting spell, call 911.

A heat emergency is a community crisis. Everyone must help.



**A heat emergency is time for community action. Check on older neighbors or those who may be sick to make sure they are not in danger.**

## Ask your Sinai doctor

**Q.** *Last summer, I checked on my aunt during the heat wave. She was in pretty bad shape. I called 911, but what should I have done while waiting for the ambulance?*

**A.** Fast treatment can reduce or prevent serious harm from extreme heat. If she's conscious, get her to a cool place – an air-conditioned car, for example. Sprinkle her with water. Give her plenty of fluids. Sports drinks are best, but water is OK. If she is unconscious, elevate her feet and fan her with a cookie sheet or magazine.

## Steps to prevent illness from the heat:

- Drink lots of fluids, *but nothing alcoholic.*
- Take cool baths or showers.
- Reduce physical activity.
- Wear loose, light clothing.
- Go to a city cooling center. In Chicago, call 311 to find one.
- In emergencies, call 911.



For information on Sinai health and community services, call **1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624); TTY (773) 257-6289.**

## Healthy living tip

*Add a sports drink (like “Gatorade”) to your grocery list. Keep it on hand for a crisis. It replaces what’s lost by the body when it’s very hot.*

### Farm-fresh can be a cool way to beat the heat

Want to stay cool indoors?  
Turn off the stove!

Summer brings farmers markets to Chicago. They're a great source of delicious, nutritious fruits and vegetables that don't have to be cooked. Eat them out of hand (after a good washing) or in salads. Or get creative and try new recipes that don't need cooking and can be kept in the refrigerator.

It's a great, refreshing way to keep your cool, even on Chicago's hottest days.

**Juicy Pop-1 serving**



**1/2 cup juice (orange, apple, grape)**  
**1 teaspoon lemon juice**  
**1 teaspoon sugar, or equivalent in artificial sweetener**

Combine ingredients. Pour into mold or paper cup. Freeze. Makes 1 serving.