Tips for Coping with Extreme Heat

**Drink plenty of water:** With age, the sensation of thirst can be impaired and decrease the body’s reserve of water. Certain medications, such as diuretics for hypertension, can interfere with the body’s cooling system. Without enough fluids the body can become dehydrated which can become a medical emergency. Try sipping water throughout the day instead of drinking only when thirsty.

**Stay out of the sun:** Sunburn occurs when skin cells, not protected from direct exposure to the sun, are burned. Depending on the length of the exposure the result can range from a mild burning sensation to severe blistering of the affected area. We remind older adults that they are more susceptible to sunburns than the general population and certain medications can cause the skin to burn more quickly, placing them at greater risk.

**Tips to keep cool:**
- Drink plenty of water and juices before you start to feel thirsty, avoid caffeine or alcohol
- Take cool baths or showers
- At home, plan outside activities for the cool parts of the day, stay in the coolest room with fans and air conditioning
- If your home is too warm, get relief at malls, movie theatres, libraries or senior centers
- Eat cool foods, such as fruits, vegetables and salads. Avoid heavy meals

If you experience headache, nausea, weakness, have profuse sweating, clammy skin or have difficulty breathing, you may be experiencing heat exhaustion. If so, lie down in a cool room and drink plenty of cool liquids. If someone can offer you a sponge bath with cool (NOT cold) water, it’s an excellent idea. A far more serious condition is heat stroke. The skin becomes hot and red, the pulse becomes rapid, sweating ceases and the body temperature soars to 105° or higher. Heat stroke requires immediate medical attention!

Also remember to watch out for neighbors who live alone or who may be experiencing problems coping with the heat. Call to check on their well-being. Stay alert and well-informed and you can enjoy the summer safely. For more information, contact your health care provider or the Department of Health in Lucas County at 419.213.4100. Outside of Lucas County, call 419.245.2840.