

Home Visit Guidelines

Thank you for helping reach out to Ohioans in vulnerable populations. Your contact is important to make sure they are safe, healthy and able to communicate their needs. This guide will help you assess their wellbeing and provide them with resources to stay well through the restoration of power.

Communication

Always treat adults as adults.

- Don't assume someone who is using words that don't make sense to you has dementia. Dehydration, stress, and fatigue can cause this.

Use a natural tone of voice and conversational style of communication.

- Be calm and reassuring.
- Speak slowly and distinctly.
- Communicate at eye level and make eye contact.
- Speak using positive language. Instead of "Don't ..." suggest what they should do.

Ask open-ended questions.

- Instead of "Are you staying cool?" ask "What are you doing to stay cool today?" "Where will you go if the power does not come back on tomorrow?"
- Ask one question at a time and give the individual time to respond.

Don't ask "testing" or "challenging" questions.

- Instead of "Do you know your name?" ask "What would you like me to call you?"
- Instead of "Do you know where you are?" say "I'm glad that I came to visit you at your home today." The adult's response will tell you whether they have forgotten where they are.

Don't correct the adult who appears to be confused.

- For example, if the person makes statements that don't fit the situation like calling you by someone else's name, say "I haven't seen 'Joe' lately but my name is ... and I'll stay with you until your family comes by" or "I'll call someone so 'Joe' will know where you are."
- Avoid arguing but validate feelings.

Risk Assessment

Check on the current status. Is that person healthy?

- Does the person depend on oxygen?
- Do they need help walking
- Do they need help getting to the bathroom?
- Skin tone: is the skin grey-ish? If so they may need medical attention.

Assess future wellness. Does that person have what they'll need for the next several days?

Check on vital supplies:

- Water
- Food (refrigerated food should be thrown out after two hours without electricity)
- Temperature control
- Medications- some may need to be refrigerated or stored on ice

Asking for Help

Make sure the person is able to call for help if it is needed.

- Don't just assume the person's phone is working- check the battery charge
- Some may not realize that cordless phones need electricity to charge
- Instead of asking, "do you have someone to call if you need help?" questions such as, "show me how you would call your daughter if you need her to come help" will be more effective.

Signs of Heat-Related Illnesses

What is heat stroke?

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

What are the warning signs of a heat stroke?

Warning signs of heat stroke vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)

- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

What should I do if I see someone with any of the warning signs of heat stroke?

If you see any of these signs, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the victim. Do the following:

- Get the victim to a shady area.
- Cool the victim rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the victim in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the victim with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the victim in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, those with high blood pressure, and those working or exercising in a hot environment.

What are the warning signs of heat exhaustion?

The warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

The skin may be cool and moist. The pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

What steps can be taken to cool the body during heat exhaustion?

- Drink cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Rest.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- Seek an air-conditioned environment.
- Wear lightweight clothing.