

**Leamington Mennonite Home
Long Term Care & Retirement Residence**

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

CATEGORY: Personnel	SUBJECT: Hot Weather Measures and Protocols – Staff Awareness	SECTION: H POLICY: 2
DATE: June 2013	Administrator's Signature: _____	
REVISION DATE: July 2015		

HOT WEATHER MEASURES AND PROTOCOLS – STAFF AWARENESS

POLICY:

The Leamington Mennonite Home will follow measures and supporting a protection plan for heat related illnesses and risks for each staff member. Our Home has air conditioning throughout with a fully functioning generator for back up use in the event of an emergency. In accordance with the Ministry of Health standards, temperature may not fall below 23°C (74°F) year-round.

PROCEDURE:

Between the months of May – September, the temperature and humidity levels will be checked by the Maintenance Worker, Summer Maintenance Student or designate on a daily basis on each floor in the Long Term Care Home. The Heat Stress Reference Chart will be used to determine the humidex level (see enclosed).

The following humidex thresholds will determine the action required:

- **30-37 (Low):** Post heat stress alerts, drink water frequently
- **38-39 (Medium):** Reduce physical activity (slower pace, more breaks), drink a cup of water every 20-30 minutes
- **40-41 (Moderate):** Further reduce physical activity, drink a cup of water every 15-20 minutes
- **42-44 (High):** Severely curtail physical activity, ensure sufficient rest/recovery time, drink a cup of water every 10-15 minutes
- **45+ (Extreme):** Hazardous to continue physical activity

The Maintenance Worker, Summer Maintenance Student or designate will report the humidex level to the Director of Administration when it is 38 or above.

All staff should be familiar with hot weather illness and factors that contribute to their development.

- Staff working in areas where there is limited air movement, heat, steam (i.e. tub rooms, kitchen, dish rooms, laundry rooms) should stay well hydrated. A labeled water bottle can be kept close by for your use and removed at the end of the shift. The doors in these potentially warm areas may be left open, at appropriate times with staff present.

- If you feel overheated, stop what you are doing and take a drink of water. Avoid sugar drinks or caffeinated drinks.
- Cool clothing can be worn in summer months. A sleeveless scrub uniform top may be worn as well as shorts and capris as outlined in the LMH Dress Code.
- All tub rooms, kitchen, and dish rooms are air conditioned, with fans to circulate the air.
- Staff working in all areas of the Home are encouraged to have cool liquids at their working stations/desks or locked on their cart (housekeeping). Avoid leaving open bottles unattended. The bottles are to be labeled with your name and remove it at the end of the shift. Avoid drinking in front of residents.
- **If you experience one of the following signs and symptoms, report immediately to your supervisor for further interventions and assistance.**

OVERVIEW OF HOT WEATHER-RELATED ILLNESS AND CONDITIONS

LMH staff should be familiar with hot weather-related illness and factors that contribute to their development. The ability to recognize signs and symptoms of hot weather-related illness and to respond promptly may prevent illness, injury or even death. Refer to the outline of heat conditions outlined below.

Heat stress may occur under those conditions, which include high temperatures and humidity, exposure to direct sun or heat, limited air movement, physical exertion, and existence of a poor physical condition, certain medications and inadequate ability to adjust to hot environments. Heat induced illness may include heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Rash

Heat rash, also called prickly heat, is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather. Sweat glands become clogged and sweat trapped beneath the skin surface unable to evaporate causing a mild inflammation or rash. The rash appears as a cluster of red bumps and may feel itchy, or sore with prickly sensation. It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts and in elbow creases. The best treatment for heat rash is to provide a cooler, less humid environment. Keep the affected area dry. Creams or lotions should not be used.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms – usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs that may occur in association with strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion. To alleviate heat cramps, stop all activities and sit quietly in a cool place. Drink water or a sports beverage (i.e. Gatorade). If the person has heart problems or is on a low sodium diet, seek medical attention.

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 staff with high blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment.

Warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

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 temperatures may rise to 41.1 degrees Celsius or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

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

- An extremely high body temperature (above 39.4°C)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

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 person. Heat stroke can result in death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided in a timely manner.

Understanding the various heat-related illnesses and conditions, especially heat stroke and heat exhaustion, is important. However, it is also important to be able to identify the risk factors.

For staff caring for residents while outside or an outdoor activity, please see attached sheet.

Leamington Mennonite Home

Tips for Resident Walks, Outings and Activities

Warm Weather Measures

Clothing:

A resident should wear loose, lightweight clothing. A wide brimmed hat will help protect the head and face and sunglasses will help protect the eyes.

Nourishments:

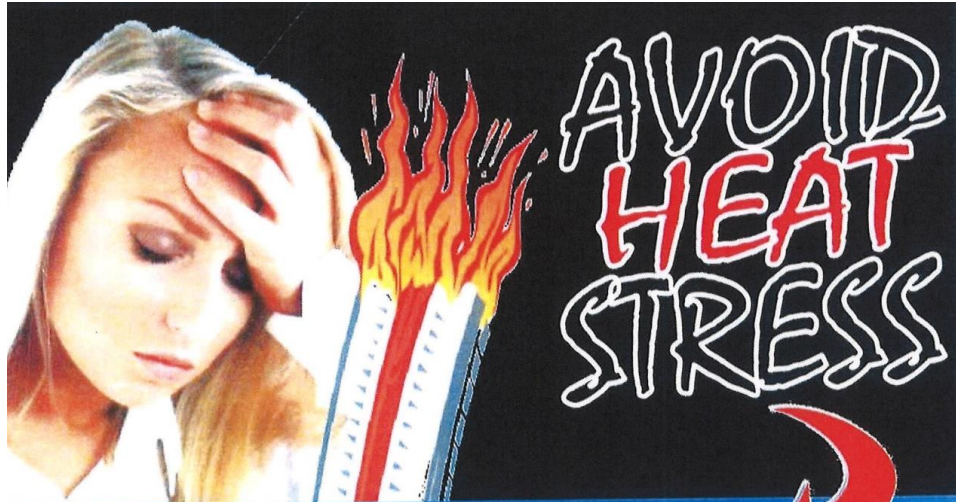
Frequent, smaller meals may be more easily tolerated during hot weather. Encourage fluids before, during and after meals, as appropriate to avoid dehydration. Between meals, frequently offer cool fluids like water, fruit juices and electrolyte replacement drinks. Other hydrating/cooling choices for snacks may include popsicles, juice bars, ice cream and sherbet.

Physical Activity:

Keep physical activity to a minimum. Allow for frequent rests and encourage rest even if the resident does not indicate being tired.

Skin Protections:

If outside, ensure residents are kept out of direct sunlight by using shade trees, covered awnings or patio umbrellas. Sunscreen should always be applied, even in the shade, as the elderly are very susceptible to sunburn. Remember to reapply as needed or directed on the packages.



PROTECT YOURSELF!

- DRINK WATER FREQUENTLY
- WEAR LIGHT, LOOSE CLOTHING
- WATCH FOR, & REPORT, STICKY & WET FLOORS
- USE SUNSCREEN & KEEP YOUR HEAD COVERED OUTDOORS
- REPORT ANY CONCERNS TO YOUR SUPERVISOR



**keep
your
cool!**