

StarTribune



Elders at risk during hot spell

Article by: Warren Wolfe , Star Tribune

Updated: July 14, 2011 - 11:05 PM

A cadre of volunteers will fan out across Minneapolis and St. Paul Saturday morning to visit about 185 very frail elders. They'll bear flowers, cookies, puzzles and other gifts -- and offering health checks as temperatures head toward 100 in the next few days.

It's the monthly Friends and Flowers visit by Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, "and luckily it coincides with the start of really hot weather," said volunteer coordinator LuAnne Speeter. "We want to be sure our clients are OK in the heat."

That's what Little Brothers is encouraging everybody to do for the next week. Temperatures could reach 100 on Sunday and stay high for several days.

An average of 688 Americans die of heat causes yearly -- with 40 percent age 65 or older -- and many deaths are preventable, says a study by the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC).

"Check in with older people, maybe even daily during a heat spell," Speeter suggested. "Keep in touch. Make sure they're feeling OK, and maybe deliver a cool treat."

This week, the nonprofit delivered electric fans from anonymous donors to 16 of its 490 clients. The agency works primarily with older people whose frailties put them at risk of isolation and loneliness.

Others more susceptible to hot-weather problems include children under age 4, said nurse Kaye Stennes, director of family life and child care at the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency.

"Dress children in light clothing and be sure they drink plenty of fluids," she said.

Other advice from Little Brothers, the Visiting Nurse Agency and the CDC:

- Drink fluids and avoid caffeine or alcoholic beverages.
- Eat fruits and vegetables for extra hydration.
- Stay indoors out of the sun.

Advertisement

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

StarTribune



- Limit physical activity. Walk slowly and use a cane, walker or wheelchair if necessary.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Use air conditioning or fans. Consider visiting air conditioned places or friends during the heat of the day.

wolfe@startribune.com • 612-673-7253

Advertisement

A large advertisement for a concert. On the left is a portrait of Carrie Underwood. To the right, the text reads: "CARRIE UNDERWOOD LIVE IN THE NEW MYSTIC AMPHITHEATER SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 ON SALE NOW!". Below this, it says "Owned and Operated by the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community". On the right side of the ad, the "Mystic LAKE" logo is displayed, with "CASINO • HOTEL" and "mysticlake.com" underneath. A small vertical text on the far left edge of the ad reads "© 2011 Star Tribune".

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™