

Special sun care for seniors

By Oak Bay News

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Seniors should keep their cool this week as Environment Canada predicts weather hitting highs of 27 degrees Saturday and Sunday in Victoria.

For active seniors it may mean getting out in the garden, but do it safely, says the Vancouver Island Health Authority.

"It's nice that we have this problem, that we're finally getting some summer weather. That will benefit people psychologically," said Richard Stanwick, chief medical health officer for VIHA.

"Get out there and enjoy the weather but take the right precautions."

Use sunscreen as always, and if you're heading out to the garden, don't do it between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

"As you get older, you actually have smaller water reserves on board," Stanwick said. "Even if you're physically active and fit, you just don't have the reserves you used to. ... Make sure you have a water bottle, and use it."

Stay away from caffeine or alcohol that stimulate the kidneys to get rid of excess water.

There are also medications seniors may take that mask the symptoms of overheating, Stanwick warns. So take the precautions and take note if your urine output drops.

"If you don't have air conditioning or a cooling fan in your apartment or your suite, this may be a good time to visit the mall," he said.

Seniors are also more prone to falls as the temperature rises.

"If you get up quickly in hot weather, your likelihood of passing out goes up," Stanwick said. "If it's hot, take it slow."

Heat stroke symptoms:

- * Hot, red, dry skin
- * Rapid pulse
- * Rapid, shallow breathing
- * Headache
- * Confusion, untypical behaviour
- * Possible loss of consciousness
- * Extremely high core temperature of up to 41 degrees Celsius

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