

MEDIA RELEASE

1 December 2009

For immediate release

HOME NURSES PREPARE FOR HEAT

Royal District Nursing Service (RDNS) is advising its thousands of clients and their carers to take important measures over the summer months to reduce the risk of heat related medical issues and complications.

Rosemary Hogan, RDNS' Executive General Manager – Client Services, says that heatwaves can happen suddenly and fast rises in temperature can affect older people very rapidly.

“Elderly people, especially those with chronic or serious illness, mobility problems, mental illness, those taking certain medications, or those living in housing which is difficult to keep cool, require extra care and support,” Ms Hogan says.

“It is important that our clients and their carers know that, while we will continue to monitor their care and overall situation during any heatwave, there are things they can do that reduce the risk of heat-related complications.”

“And it’s not just RDNS clients who can benefit: anyone can do these things to reduce the impact of what looks to be a very hot summer coming up,” she says.

Ms Hogan gives the following advice to help people prepare for the coming months.

To control body temperature clients should:

- reduce levels of physical exertion
- take regular cool showers or baths
- wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothing to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation
- sprinkle clothes with water regularly, and splash cool water on the face and neck or use a damp cloth on the back of the neck to help temperature regulation.

Within the home RDNS advises clients to:

- Check that fridges and freezers work properly
- Ensure that fans and air-conditioning units are in good working order
- Check that north and west facing windows (which let in the most sun) are shaded, preferably with curtains containing pale, reflective lining
- Use outdoor shutters or external shades where possible
- Ventilate their home in the evening, as long as this does not pose a security threat
- Move to a cooler room when possible
- Stay out of the sun, particularly between 11:00am and 3:00pm.

Other important general advice includes:

- Maintaining and monitoring fluid intake
- Ensuring the phone is always within a client’s reach.

The nursing provider has also advised clients that on days where newly introduced fire risk warnings are in force, there may be some effects on RDNS' services.

These include possible delays to service provision on days where risk is classed as 'Catastrophic' or 'Extreme' and a suspension of nursing services for clients living in 'High Risk' areas, until the danger has passed.

RDNS has advised clients living in 'High Risk' areas that they need to develop alternative arrangements for managing their nursing care as part of their personal emergency plan, to be implemented on days classified as 'Catastrophic' or 'Extreme'.

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