

Considerations for physicians:
Mitigating the adverse health effects of heat in older Colorado adults
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Increasing temperature due to climate change is one of the greatest emerging threats to human health. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to adverse effects of heat due to age-related physiologic changes that impair homeostasis when temperatures are high. This risk is increased when combined with other social and environmental factors, which vary immensely between individuals. This study aims to explore vulnerabilities of older adults (65 years and older) in Colorado, based on population demographics and local climate considerations, with the goal of identifying information important to physician-led mitigation of adverse effects of heat in this population. Other related risks among older adults in Colorado include living alone (26% of adults 65 and older), overall disability (31%), high levels of physical activity, a large agricultural workforce, and a dry climate which may increase the risk of dehydration. Medications that may increase the risk of adverse effects of heat were also reviewed and compiled into a chart designed to facilitate physician education. The goal is to provide clinicians with information on how climate change can pose risks to the health of individual patients seen in everyday practice, the vulnerable elders in particular, and the importance of a medication review, with appropriate dose adjustments, modifications, and patient counseling to decrease the risk of heat-related injury or illness.