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Infection Prevention & Control Care Provider Newsletter

NHS
Somerset

Email: somicb.infectionpreventioncontrolteam@nhs.net

Heatwave advice

As the summer season approaches, it's important for us to be prepared for the possibility of heatwaves in the UK. Extreme heat can pose risks, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Let's work together to stay cool and safe during these hot spells. Here are some valuable tips:



Water

Drink plenty
of water



Sunscreen

Wear sunscreen
above SPF15 and
cover up in the sun

1. Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate: Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, throughout the day. Avoid sugary or alcoholic beverages as they can contribute to dehydration.
2. Plan outdoor activities wisely: If you must go outside, try to schedule activities during the cooler hours of the day, such as early morning or late evening. Wear light-coloured, breathable clothing, a hat and sunglasses, and apply sunscreen.
3. Stay informed: Keep updated on weather forecasts and heatwave warnings from local authorities and make yourself aware of relevant information and advice on staying safe.



Shade

Stay in the
shade between
11am-3pm



Rest

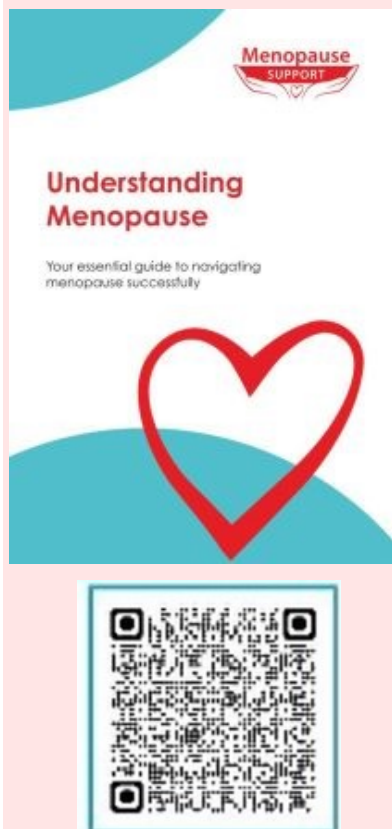
Take rest breaks
if you're out and
about

4. Create a cool indoor environment: Keep your living spaces cool by closing windows, curtains, and blinds during the hottest parts of the day. If available, use fans or air conditioning units. Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing, and consider using cool damp towels or taking cool (but not cold) showers to stay refreshed.
5. Look out for each other: Check on your fellow residents and staff members, especially those who may be more susceptible to heat-related illnesses, such as the elderly or those with pre-existing health conditions. Offer support and assistance, and encourage everyone to take necessary precautions.

If you, or anyone in your care, experiences symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, headaches, or rapid breathing, seek medical help immediately. Let's come together as a caring community and ensure everyone's comfort and safety during the summer months.

The Somerset UTI Workshop on 21st June 2023

Dr Juliet Balfour, from the Somerset NHS Menopause Service, gave a talk on Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause at the above workshop which provided a lot of useful information and food for thought.



Genitourinary Syndrome of Menopause replaces the term vulvovaginal atrophy and post-menopausal atrophic vaginitis.

It describes the multiple changes that occur in the vulva, vagina, bladder, urethra and pelvic floor etc, which are caused by reduced estrogen levels during the peri-menopause transition to post menopause.

Reduced estrogen leads to: thinning of the urogenital epithelium (including the urethra and trigone of the bladder), reduced blood flow, reduced elasticity, changes in vaginal and urinary microbiome, with increased vaginal PH leading to loss of vaginal lactobacilli and increase in E. coli and other pathogens (which can increase inflammation and predispose to UTI)

Symptoms include: Frequency, Nocturia, Urgency, Urge incontinence, Dysuria, TI's after sex, Recurrent UTI (8-11% of post-menopausal women report recurrent UTI), Urethral prolapse and many other symptoms.

Studies have found that symptoms have been reported in 50% of women aged 50-60 and in 72% of women over 70.

Treatments include, Vaginal Tablets, Vaginal creams and gels, Vaginal pessaries and Vaginal ring. To find out about more symptoms and treatments access the menopausesupport.co.uk [leaflet](#) and [resources](#) via these links or scan the QR code opposite.

Could your Residents or even staff have any of these symptoms?

Useful Links:

- womens-health-concern.org
- Rock My Menopause
- Somerset NHS Menopause Service
- Daisynetwork.org
- Breastcancernow.org

Group A Streptococcus



The IPC team wish to shed light on two pressing matters that affect our shared responsibility in maintaining a safe and healthy environment: Strep A and invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS). Recent outbreaks in care homes across the UK have highlighted the need for heightened awareness and proactive measures to prevent the spread of this potentially life-threatening infection.

Strep A, or Group A Streptococcus, is a bacterial infection that can cause severe illnesses, ranging from strep throat to more severe conditions like necrotising fasciitis and toxic shock syndrome. While commonly associated with schools and communities, care homes are not immune to its risks.

In addition to Strep A, we must also be aware of invasive Group A Strep (iGAS), a more serious form of the infection that can spread rapidly through the body. It can lead to life-threatening conditions such as bloodstream infections and pneumonia.

To ensure the well-being of residents and staff alike, it is crucial to recognise the signs and symptoms of Strep A and iGAS, such as sore throat, fever, rash, difficulty swallowing, and rapid deterioration. Timely detection can prevent the spread of infection and allow for appropriate medical intervention.

Vigilant monitoring and effective infection control measures play a pivotal role in reducing Strep A and iGAS transmission. Encouraging regular hand hygiene, effective sanitation protocols, and consistent disinfection practices can significantly minimise the risk of contamination.

Education and communication are also key in combating Strep A and iGAS. We urge care home managers and staff to familiarise themselves with relevant guidelines and resources provided by health authorities. Regular training sessions and information sharing will empower your team to implement preventive measures confidently.

Let us join forces to create a safer care home environment where residents can thrive and receive the very best care. By prioritising Strep A and invasive Group A Strep awareness and implementing proactive measures, we can safeguard the well-being of our community.



Somerset Carers Group

The IPC Team have been travelling across Somerset to Carers Groups, consisting of paid and unpaid carers, educating about hydration, the importance and link to Urinary Tract Infections and their role in keeping themselves, loved ones and employees healthy.

We know that the largest percentage of E. coli UTIs are in the community.

Your homes can help with this too!

Your residents' families/friends and visitors who come to your establishments are members of the public and therefore you too can help in reducing E. coli UTIs and Antimicrobial Stewardships!

SPARK
SOMERSET
INSPIRING COMMUNITIES



**BECOME AN
ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN**

Keep Antibiotics Working