

JULY 2024 ARTICLE FOR CULPEPER TIMES

ELLEN PHIPPS, AGING TOGETHER

July is a time for travel; a time to re-charge; and sometimes a time to engage in new programs and activities. Participating in various forms of recreation is particularly important for older adults. Research has shown that being active is related to greater self-reported physical functioning, less fear of falling and fewer depressive symptoms. Studies have also shown that going outdoors and being physically active can have long term functional health benefits for older adults. With outdoor activity, the relationship between Vitamin D and bone health is well established.

Don't forget to check out your county's parks and recreation or government website to see what activities they're offering for older adults over the summer (and year-round!)

It is also important to be mindful of the heat!

Older adults can stay safe during the summer by taking several precautionary measures. It's essential to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, as older adults are more susceptible to dehydration. Wearing lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing can help keep the body cool and protect the skin from sunburn. Applying broad-spectrum sunscreen with a high SPF, even on cloudy days, is crucial to prevent skin damage. Planning outdoor activities during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or late evening, can minimize exposure to extreme heat. Additionally, staying in air-conditioned environments during peak heat hours, taking cool showers, and using fans can help regulate body temperature. Regularly checking weather forecasts and heat advisories can aid in planning safe outdoor activities. It's also important for older adults to be mindful of medication that may affect their body's response to heat and to consult with healthcare providers about any concerns. Staying connected with family, friends, or neighbors ensures that someone can offer assistance if needed.

The Adult Cool Care team at Encompass Community Supports provides FREE fans and air conditioners to adults 60 and above who meet certain income guidelines. Cool Care is available to community members of Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, or Rappahannock counties. The enrollment period begins May 1 and ends October 31, and the fans and air conditioners are subject to availability. Supplies are limited.

For more ideas about regional activities please visit Aging Together at www.agingtogether.org