



e-Newsletter

SeniorsBC.ca

## Message from Parliamentary Secretary Michelle Stilwell



It's hard to believe summer is racing by so quickly. I hope everyone has been able to take advantage of the gorgeous weather by getting out and being active!

I've certainly enjoyed swimming, cycling and getting out with my family and friends to enjoy our beautiful province. Hot summer weather and unusually busy schedules can create unexpected problems, however. With that in mind, I would like to share some tips for staying safe during those unusually hot spells we get in B.C. from time to time - not only for seniors, but for their family and friends.

First and foremost, it's important to check in at least twice a day with loved ones who may be at risk during hot weather. This includes seniors who live alone and have mobility or health issues. If their residence is hot, close the curtains or blinds – or, consider taking them to a mall, library or a friend's house that has air conditioning.

If you aren't in a position to check in, I suggest getting in touch with an organization that helps seniors remain independent, such as the United Way through their 'Better at Home' program, if there is one your community. Better at Home assists seniors with day-to-day tasks and can include something as simple as a friendly visit. More information can be found by visiting:

[www.betterathome.ca](http://www.betterathome.ca)

UV rays can bring a few dangers as the sun is most intense between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. It's best to limit exposure to direct sunlight during these hours.

Remember that cooler temperatures do not lower UV values. Use sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection and a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. It may be best to do outside activities like gardening first thing in the morning, or in the evening.

Drink plenty of water and don't wait until you are thirsty. I know it's tempting to have a soda or an iced coffee, but the caffeine and sugar can actually cause you to lose more body fluid.

Dress appropriately. Many of us like to venture outside in shorts and a t-shirt, but it's best to wear a hat and light-coloured, lightweight clothes that cover your arms, legs and the rest of your skin.

Know the signs of heat stroke. These include headache, flushed skin, nausea and disorientation. If you or someone close may be experiencing these symptoms, move to a shady, cool area right away to cool down and seek help immediately.

Many seniors use medications and some of them may increase your sensitivity to the sun. If you have any questions about your medications, check with your pharmacist or physician.

As summer continues, please keep these precautionary measures in mind so you can safely enjoy the blue skies before the season turns and cooler weather arrives!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Stilwell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Michelle Stilwell**

Parliamentary Secretary for Healthy Living and Seniors to the Minister of Health

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