

NEWS RELEASE

March 2, 2020

RELEASE TIME: Immediate

CONTACT PERSON: Shelly Ferris or Lahona Young -- Ombudsman Supervisors

Can you recognize the signs?

If you are feeling thirsty or parched it is easy to recognize this as your body needing water. However, as we get older that same sense of thirst will diminish over time. Signs of dehydration in the elderly can appear in different ways, making the need for water to go unrecognized; for example, fatigue, dry mouth, muscle cramps, or dizziness. Unfortunately, these symptoms are often overlooked and attributed to aging, medications, or a medical condition, leaving many older adults to become hospitalized.

Other indicators of dehydration include: Rapid weight loss, dry skin, confusion or hallucinations, light-headedness, sunken eyes, flushing, rapid pulse, fever, dark urine, and urinary tract infections. Severe dehydration can have serious health consequences and can even be fatal; it is important to prevent this through good hydration. Don't like to drink water? Try drinking a little at a time throughout the day. Drink water before a meal, during, and after, then drink some water before and after exercises, etc. If plain water is just not appetizing, try adding a twist of mint, lemon, or lime. Many foods are also very hydrating, so seek out foods high in water content.

As a final note, people with certain medical conditions like heart failure may have more specific fluid needs. Make sure to consult with a medical professional before making changes to your diet or liquid intake.

Those living in nursing homes may become dehydrated as a result of their environment, or if they are not getting adequate care. If you have a loved one living in a nursing home and you feel they are not getting the care they need. Be aware, they have an advocate. Every long-term care facility has an Ombudsman to advocate on the resident's behalf. To speak to an area Ombudsman Supervisor contact Shelly Ferris, 1-800-482-4594, ext. 226, sferris@grandgateway.org or Lahona Young 1-800-482-4594, ext. 220 lyoung@grandgateway.org. You can also contact agencies responsible for investigating reports of resident abuse and mistreatment. Oklahoma State Health Department: 1(800)747-8419; Adult Protective Services Hot Line: 1(800)522-3511