

## —Seniors—

**Heat and Your Heart**

Our bodies are programmed to maintain a temperature of about 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit for optimum performance. If the body's temperature rises even a couple of degrees, it tries to cool itself down, mostly through perspiration and dilation of the blood vessels. The evaporating sweat cools the body and as a result of the larger blood vessel size, the heart beats faster and the blood pressure decreases.

That increased heart rate and lower blood pressure can cause problems for those with heart disease. As a rule, those with heart disease are sensitive to extremes in temperatures due to the challenges placed on the heart. Medications taken by many patients with heart disease can also cause problems in extreme heat, such as diuretics or water pills to reduce the fluid retention. During hot weather, diuretics may actually cause dehydration. However, patients should be warned against drinks large amounts of fluid, as recommended to the general public during heat spells, as this could add significant stress on heart and the cardiovascular system. Beta-blockers, which are commonly prescribed, can prevent the heart from beating as rapidly as it needs to during hot weather, thereby limiting the body's ability to cool down.

**Keep Your Cool**

Overall, individuals with heart disease should follow the same guidelines as healthy individuals, but with an extra helping of precaution:

- Stay inside during the hottest part of the day.
  - If your home isn't air conditioned, try to find someplace that is.
  - Limit your activity.
  - Wear loose-fitting, light clothing.
  - Stay hydrated and avoid caffeine and alcohol.
  - Have someone check in on you.
- Recognizing Danger Signs  
Knowing the signs of heat-related

illness and knowing what to do can help save a life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies two types -- heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion is a milder heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and an excessive loss of water and salt through sweat. According to the CDC, warning signs include:

- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Fainting

Anyone with heart problems or high blood pressure experiencing these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Heat stroke, the most severe heat-related illness, occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. Temperatures may rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

The CDC lists these warning signs:

- Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion

If you see any of these signs, have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you start cooling the victim by getting them to a shady area and immersing them in cool water. Do not give the person any fluids.

**Tom and Maya**

You may have seen them around town or at the Sunrise Mall. They are an attention getting pair, for you see, Maya is a Goffin Cockatoo. Tom was doing Volunteer work at Feathered Follies in Lafayette when Maya was brought in. She had been hand raised and fed from birth and her owners decided when she was two years old they no longer had the patience for this inquisitive extremely active bird. Especially after Maya had virtually destroyed a wedding set up and caused close to \$6,000 worth of damage. While in our office she kept trying to chew the computer cords. This bird is definitely not for the first time bird owner or anyone lacking the time for this carefree and busy bird. Maya is eight years old now but still has the curiosity and carefree temperament of a two year old, and will maintain those same characteristic throughout her life. Goffin's have a life expectancy of 40 years. For Tom, Maya has been a blessing in his life and a ray of sunshine through difficult times. Giffons are sometimes referred to as "Velcro" birds as they attach themselves to their owner. Maya is typical in her perpetual motion and looking for things to do, or get into. She is also very socialized and intelligent as Giffon's are known to be. She follows Tom's commands and performs tricks to the enjoyment of anyone watching. She is also very affectionate as is evident in the many kisses she gives Tom and the way she preens his hair and mustache. May is always with Tom and even sleeps with him at night on occasion. It is important that this breed is not left unsupervised when out of the cage as their inquisitive nature can quickly land them in trouble. They were added to the endangered species list in 1992 and may even be extinct in the wild. Due to widespread trapping and destruction of their native habitat by the timber industry, they have become more of a domesticated animal. If you spot Tom and Maya around town stop and visit, Maya is more than willing to do tricks for you. ☺

**10,000 Points of Light**, Continued from page 3

at any level, as the first contacts for assistance. They are, and should be, the last resort in an emergency.

On the other side, I know another individual who sees the current President's "Faith-Based Initiative" program as a thinly veiled means of providing federal assistance for overtly religious organizations—which this individual feels should be voluntarily supported by their membership (especially those who require membership as a condition of providing service).

I will be writing more on this topic ("10,000 Points of Light") in upcoming issues, and sharing this kind of stealth philanthropy.

If you know of any events in our local community—involving unusual situations and events where private efforts have provided extraordinary solutions—please e-mail me [editor@orangevalejournal.com](mailto:editor@orangevalejournal.com). Nominations for Points of Light recognition should be provided by third parties, individuals not directly involved in providing the service, so we can provide unsolicited recognition. ☺



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