

Tips on Preventing and Managing Heat

The best defense is prevention. Here are some prevention tips:

- Drink more fluids (nonalcoholic), regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Warning: If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask him how much you should drink while the weather is hot.
- Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugar—these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also, avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.
- Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area.
- Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, fans will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath, or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- NEVER leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle.
- Although any one at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others. Check regularly on:
 - Infants and young children
 - People aged 65 or older
 - People who have a mental illness
 - Those who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure
- Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.

If you must be out in the heat:

- Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Cut down on exercise. If you must exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. A sports beverage can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat. Warning: If you are on a low-salt diet, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage. Remember the warning in the first "tip" (above), too.
- Try to rest often in shady areas.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat (also keeps you cooler) and sunglasses and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher (the most effective products say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels).

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Recognizing Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

The skin may be cool and moist. The victim's pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast and shallow. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention immediately if any of the following occurs:

- Symptoms are severe.
- The victim has heart problems or high blood pressure.

Otherwise, help the victim to cool off, and seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than 1 hour.

What to Do

Cooling measures that may be effective include the following:

- Cool, nonalcoholic beverages, as directed by your physician
- Rest
- Cool shower, bath, or sponge bath
- An air-conditioned environment
- Lightweight clothing

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. The body's temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Recognizing Heat Stroke

Warning signs of heat stroke vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F, orally)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

What to Do

If you see any of these signs, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the victim. Do the following:

- Get the victim to a shady area.
- **Cool the victim rapidly using whatever methods you can.** For example, immerse the victim in a tub of cool water; place the person in a cool shower; spray the victim with cool water from a garden hose; sponge the person with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the victim in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.
- Monitor body temperature, and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the victim alcohol to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

Sometimes a victim's muscles will begin to twitch uncontrollably as a result of heat stroke. If this happens, keep the victim from injuring himself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, make sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his or her side.

Sunburn

Sunburn should be avoided because it damages the skin. Although the discomfort is usually minor and healing often occurs in about a week, a more severe sunburn may require medical attention. Prevention is the key, use sun blockers or wear protective clothing when you know you are going to be exposed to the sun for any period of time. SPF 15 or greater is recommended.

Recognizing Sunburn

Symptoms of sunburn are well known: skin becomes red, painful, and abnormally warm after sun exposure.

What to Do

Consult a doctor if the sunburn affects an infant younger than 1 year of age or if these symptoms are present:

- Fever
- Fluid-filled blisters
- Severe pain

Also, remember these tips when treating sunburn:

- Avoid repeated sun exposure.
- Apply cold compresses or immerse the sunburned area in cool water.
- Apply moisturizing lotion to affected areas. Do not use salve, butter, or ointment.
- Do not break blisters.