

# EXTREME HEAT

A prevention guide to promote your personal health and safety

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## What is EXTREME HEAT?

Temperatures that hover 10 degrees or more above the average high temperature for the region and last for several weeks are defined as extreme heat.

## During HOT WEATHER...

*The following tips are important:*

### Drink Plenty of Fluids

During hot weather you need to increase your fluid intake, regardless of your activity level. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses (16-32 ounces) of fluids each hour.



### Stay Cool Indoors

Stay indoors and, if at all possible, stay in an air-conditioned place.

### Use a Buddy System

When working, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. If you are over 65, have a friend or relative call and check on you twice a day during a heat wave. If you know someone in this age group, check on them twice a day.

### Monitor Those at High Risk

- ❖ Infants, children & older adults are sensitive to the effects of high temperatures
- ❖ People who are overweight may be prone to heat sickness because of their tendency to retain more body heat.
- ❖ People who are physically ill or taking certain medications may be affected by extreme heat.

### Replace Salt & Minerals

Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body. These are necessary for your body and must be replaced.

### Wear Appropriate Clothing and Sunscreen

If you must go outdoors, protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat along with sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.

### Schedule Outdoor Activities Carefully

Try to limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.

### Pace Yourself

If you are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually.

### Adjust to the Environment

Be aware that any sudden change in temperature, such as an early summer heat wave, will be stressful to your body.



### Use Common Sense

Avoid hot foods and heavy meals, drink plenty of fluids and replace salts and minerals in your body, do not leave infants, children, or pets in a parked car & provide plenty of fresh water for your pets, and leave the water in a shady area.

# **HOT WEATHER HEALTH EMERGENCIES**

Even short periods of high temperatures can cause serious health problems.

## **Heat Stroke**

Heat stroke occurs when 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.

### ***Symptoms of Heat Stroke***

- ❖ 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, 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.
- ❖ 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 fluids to drink.

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.

## **Heat Exaustion**

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.

### ***Symptoms of Heat Exaustion***

- ❖ 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
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Rest
- ❖ Cool shower or bath
- ❖ An air-conditioned environment
- ❖ Lightweight clothing

## Heat Cramps

Heat cramps usually affect people who sweat a lot during strenuous activity, which depletes the body's salt and moisture.



### ***Recognizing Heat Cramps***

Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms—usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs—that may occur in association with strenuous activity.

### ***What to do***

If medical attention is not necessary, take these steps:

- ❖ Stop all activity, and sit quietly in a cool place
- ❖ Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- ❖ Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside, because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- ❖ Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in 1 hour.

## Heat Rash

Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather. It can occur at any age but is most common in young children.

### ***Recognizing Heat Rash***

Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. It is more likely to occur on the neck, and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

### ***What to do***

The best treatment for heat rash is to provide a cooler, less humid environment. Keep the affected area dry. Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort. Treating heat rash is simple and usually does not require medical assistance. Other heat-related problems can be much more severe.

## 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.

### ***Recognizing Sunburn***

Symptoms of sunburn are well known: the 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.

