

Staying Cool This Summer

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Facts about the heat. . .

- The Center for Disease Control estimates that 300 people a year die from heat related ailments**
- Additionally, thousands of people suffer from heat stroke, dehydration, and heat exhaustion each year**

Heat-related Illness

Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke are collectively known as heat-related illness.

Facts about Heat Cramps

- Are intermittent, involuntary muscle spasms that occur in an individual who is physically active in hot weather.
- Are the least serious of the three heat-related illnesses, but still can be very painful

More on Heat Cramps

- Heat cramps usually affect the major muscles that are being stressed in a hot environment and are often associated with dehydration
 - Thigh, leg, (quadriceps, hamstrings, gastrocnemius), the core muscles (abdominal wall and back) and the arm muscles (biceps, triceps)

Heat cramps can also occur after the activity has been completed.

Heat Cramp Symptoms

- Profuse sweating
- Involuntary spasms of the large muscles of the body
- Heat cramps are the earliest symptoms of a heat-related illness

Treatment for Heat Cramps

Most treatment for heat cramps can occur before seeking medical care:

- stop the activity being performed,
- get to a cooler place,
- drink plenty of fluids, and
- gently stretch the muscles that are cramping.

Facts on 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.

Heat Exhaustion Symptoms

Warning signs of heat exhaustion include:

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

The skin may be cool and moist. The victim's pulse rate will be fast and weak, and breathing will be fast shallow. **If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke, which is a medical emergency. Seek medical attention and call 911 immediately if:**

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

Heat exhaustion treatment

Cooling measures that may be effective include:

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

Facts on Heat Stroke

- Heat stroke is a form of hyperthermia in which the body temperature is elevated dramatically
- **Heat stroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal if not promptly and properly treated**


Signs & Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Sometimes heat stroke can mimic those of heart attack or other condition. Sometimes a person experiences symptoms of heat exhaustion before progressing to heat stroke.

Some individuals may develop symptoms of heat stroke suddenly and rapidly without warning.

Common Signs & Symptoms


- High body temperature
- The absence of sweating, with hot red or flushed dry skin
- Rapid pulse
- Difficulty breathing
- Strange behavior
- Hallucinations


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- Confusion
 - Agitation
 - Disorientation
 - Seizure, and/or
 - Coma

Treatment for Heat Stroke

Victims of heat stroke must receive immediate treatment to avoid permanent organ damage. *First and foremost, cool the victim.*

- Get the victim to a shady area, remove clothing, apply cool or tepid water to the skin, fan the victim to promote sweating and evaporation, and place ice packs under armpits and groin.

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- If the person is able to drink liquids, have them drink cool water or other cool beverages that do not contain alcohol or caffeine.
 - Monitor body temperature with a thermometer and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101 to 102F



Always notify emergency services (911) immediately. If their arrival is delayed, they can give you further instructions for treatment of the victim.

Fact. . .

- Senior citizens are more susceptible to the effects of heat as their bodies return to normal slowly and their bodies cooling mechanism is not as efficient as younger people.



Tips for Staying Cool:

- 1.) The faster you move, the faster your body heats up. Therefore, seniors should take it slow in the summer.
- 2.) Plan outdoor activities for the morning when it is cooler. Try to stay under the shade of trees or under a covered porch.






- 3.) Try to stay in air conditioning as much as possible. If you do not have air conditioning, consider visiting public places such as libraries, shopping malls, etc. to stay cool during the hottest hours of the day.

- 4.) Proper ventilation is essential so that temperature and humidity do not become too high. In places where there are no fans or air conditioning it may be dangerous if temperature rises above 90 °F.



- 5.) Check your medications. Ask your doctor to make sure your medications do not have side effects that could mess with your body's ability to control temperatures and cool itself (some diuretics and antibiotics).

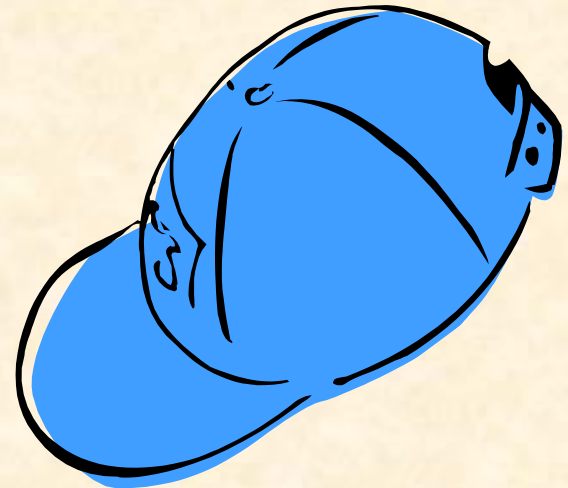




Medications taken for various illnesses can put persons at greater risk for heat stroke.

- Drugs that increase stimulation of hormones in the brain (dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine), cause an increase in heat in the body by revving up the metabolism.
- Stimulant drugs and certain respiratory and heart medications
- Psychotropic meds

6.) Plan for outdoor events. Wear light colored, loose fitting clothing made of cotton. Consider wearing a head covering such as a hat or cap.





- 7.) Stay away from caffeine and alcohol when in the heat as these beverages accelerate dehydration. Chose water and sports drinks that will help replace the sodium and potassium lost in through sweating.

- 8.) To make a homemade rehydration drink mix half teaspoon table salt, 3-4 tablespoons sugar, half teaspoon baking soda and a quarter teaspoon Salt Lite or other salt substitute in a quart (950 ml) of water. This home made drink is not suitable for children under 12

