



Better Safe



Beat The Heat

RECOGNIZING HEAT RELATED ILLNESSES

About Heat-Related Illnesses

Most heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat rash, are common conditions associated with rising body temperatures and overexertion in warm temperatures. Often, victims of heat-related illnesses have been working outside in high temperatures, are dehydrated, or are possibly elderly, very young, or suffer from chronic conditions such as diabetes.

Though most heat-related illnesses do not require professional medical assistance, some, such as heat stroke, are very serious and potentially life threatening. In this article we'll take a look at the two most common heat-related illnesses: heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Signs & Symptoms

HEAT EXHAUSTION—Heat exhaustion is typically the result of dehydration through perspiration in warm temperatures. Symptoms will include:

- ✓ Excessive sweating
- ✓ Cold, moist, or pale skin
- ✓ Headache or nausea and vomiting
- ✓ General fatigue

HEAT STROKE—Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke—a potentially life-threatening medical condition. Heat stroke occurs when a person's body is unable to keep itself cool, leading to body temperatures as high as, or exceeding, 105°F. There is no home treatment for heat stroke. If a person shows signs of heat stroke, seek medical assistance immediately—call 911. Symptoms of heat stroke include:

- ✓ Absence of sweating
- ✓ Hot, red, and/or dry skin
- ✓ Unconsciousness, confusion, or dementia
- ✓ Rapid pulse
- ✓ Rapid, shallow breathing

PREVENTION—As mentioned earlier, heat-related illnesses are, indeed, common conditions. But the fact is, they don't have to be. By taking the following precautions, especially when working outside in high temperatures, your time in the sun will be much more safe.

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids—eight, 8oz. glasses of water daily, and more with increased physical activity and higher outside temperatures.
- ✓ When working outside, take frequent rest breaks out of the sun to cool your body.
- ✓ Schedule outdoor events during cooler times of the day or year if possible.
- ✓ Eat fruits and vegetables to replace lost vitamins and minerals.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE

Heat stroke, when untreated, causes a person's core body temperature to rise to or exceed temperatures as high as 105°F. Such high temperatures can prevent a victim's organs from functioning properly, leading to death. If you suspect someone is suffering from heat stroke, seek professional medical assistance immediately. Seek immediate medical assistance in the following situations.

- ▼ If the person's body temperature has reached or exceeded 102°F
- ▼ If the person's pulse is either rapid or weak
- ▼ If the person is or was unconscious or greatly confused
- ▼ If the person's breathing has become rapid or shallow
- ▼ If the person has stopped sweating altogether, and their skin has become hot, red, and dry
- ▼ If the person's pupils are dilated

AN ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY

Get Enough Water. If you are doing strenuous activity outside during hot weather, drink two to four glasses (16 to 32 ounces each) of cool fluids each hour. Avoid alcoholic beverages, they will dehydrate you.

