

Heat Safety

Care Provider Bulletin

July 2017



What are the heat-related illnesses?

- Heat stroke
- Heat exhaustion
- Heat cramps
- Sunburn
- Heat rash

Who is most vulnerable to heat-related illnesses?

- Infants and young children
- Older adults (65+)
- Individuals that work outside
- Individuals with disabilities
- People that take medications that interfere with the body's heat regulation system (e.g. antidepressants, antihistamines, antipsychotic drugs, high-blood pressure drugs, overactive-bladder treatments)

Did you know?

- In the United States, extreme heat is the cause of death for around 618 people every year.
- Your car can increase to dangerous temperatures even with a cracked window within 10 minutes.
- When outside temperature is 80 degrees Fahrenheit, it only takes 20 minutes for the car temperature to reach 118 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Sweating is your body's way of cooling itself down to prevent damage to the brain and other vital organs.
- Heat-related illnesses occur when a body's temperature cannot cool itself fast enough.



Prevention

- Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Limit outdoor activities, especially exercise in the heat.
- Protect skin using sunblock with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more: the lighter the skin, the higher the SPF should be. Apply 15-30 minutes before going in the sun and reapply according to package directions.
- Use a lip balm that contains sunscreen.
- Wear muted (lighter colored), loose-fitting clothing.
- Wear a hat (the looser, the better).
- Wear sunglasses that absorb at least 90% ultraviolet rays.
- Clouds and particles in the air scatter sunlight. You can receive a sunburn even on a cloudy day.
- Be aware that using a fan as the main cooling source may not be enough. If possible, spend a few hours in air-conditioned areas (e.g. the mall).
- Drink water even when you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid using the oven or stove to maintain a cooler temperature.
- Avoid alcoholic or sugary drinks.
- Check on others or have others check on you twice a day when temperatures are warmer than usual.

Symptoms of heat-related illnesses

Heat stroke

- Dehydration
- Body temperature of 103 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Increased, strong pulse
- Headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea
- Loss of consciousness

What to do

- Seek medical help right away - heat stroke is a 911 emergency
- Move to a cooler place
- Lower body temperature with a cool cloth or bath

Heat exhaustion

- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Weak, fast pulse
- Vomiting or nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Feeling tired or weak
- Dizziness, headache
- Loss of consciousness

What to do

- Move to a cooler place
- Loosen clothing
- Lower body temperature with a cool cloth or bath

Heat cramps

- Muscle pain or spasms related to the heat

What to do

- Stop any strenuous activity and move to a cool place
- Drink water or a sports drink to hydrate
- Wait for cramps to go away before performing any physical activity

Sunburn

- Skin is red, warm or painful
- Blisters appear

What to do

- Avoid the sun until sunburn heals
- Lower body temperature with a cool cloth or bath
- Use moisturizing lotion
- Avoid breaking blisters

Heat rash

- Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin

What to do

- Stay in a cool, dry place
- Keep rash dry
- Soothe the rash by using powder (e.g. baby powder)

When to seek professional medical help

- When you suspect heat stroke - this is a 911 medical emergency
- When you vomit from symptoms related to the heat
- When symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke persist for an hour or more
- When you experience heat cramp while on a low-sodium diet or have heart problems



Immediately contact a medical professional if you suspect a heat stroke

Sources & Resources

- **Center for Disease Control and Prevention**, www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html
- **Department of Homeland Security**, <https://ready.gov/heat>