



Office of Emergency Management

Prepare - Respond - Recover

Heat Related Hazards

Did You Know?

It's actually the evaporation of sweat from your skin that cools you. Sweating is your body's way of reducing its core temperature. Make sure you keep sweating and maintain your cooling system by drinking plenty of water.

Preventing Heat-Related Illness

Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.

Drink water. Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.

Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein, which increase metabolic heat.

Take regular breaks when engaged in physical activity on warm days. If you recognize that you, or someone else, are showing the signs or symptoms of a heat-related illness, stop the activity and find a place to cool down.

Recognize These Heat-Related Illnesses and Know What To Do

Heat Cramps:

- Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal muscles or the legs. It is generally thought that the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes the cramps. ***These cramps can be very painful.***

Heat Exhaustion:

- Heat exhaustion typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place. Body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. With heat exhaustion, sweat does not evaporate, as it should, possibly because of high humidity or too many layers of clothing. As a result, the body is not cooled properly. ***Signs include cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.***

What to do for Heat Cramps or Heat Exhaustion:

- Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. If the person is fully awake and alert, give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them, as they can make conditions worse. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as towels or wet sheets. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if the person refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness.

Heat Stroke:

- Heat stroke is life threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. ***Signs include hot, red and dry skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high--sometimes as high as 105°F.***

What to do for Heat Stroke:

- Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation! Help is needed fast. **Call 911.** Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. If you have ice packs or cold packs, wrap them in a cloth and place them on each of the victim's wrists and ankles, in the armpits and on the neck to cool the large blood vessels. Watch for signals of breathing problems and make sure the airway is clear. Keep the person lying down.