

Heat Stress

Spending too long in extreme heat can have serious consequences for your health and well-being! Whenever these conditions arise, pay attention to your body's response and keep an eye out for symptoms that could resemble those listed below.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature regulatory system fails and sweating becomes inadequate. A heat stroke victim's skin is hot, usually dry, red or spotted. Body temperature is usually at 105°F or higher, rendering the victim confused, delirious, and in some cases, even convulsive or unconscious. Unless the victim receives quick and appropriate treatment, death can occur. Any person with signs or symptoms of heat stroke requires immediate hospitalization.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused by the loss of large amounts of body fluids through sweating, sometimes due to excessive loss of salt. A person suffering from heat exhaustion still sweats, but experiences extreme weakness or fatigue, as well as giddiness, nausea, or headaches. In more serious cases, the victim may vomit or lose consciousness. The skin is clammy and moist, the complexion is pale or flushed, and body temperature is normal or only slightly elevated.

Heat Cramps and Fatigue

Heat cramps are painful spasms of the muscles that occur among those who sweat profusely in heat, drink large quantities of water, but cannot adequately replace the body's salt loss. Drinking large quantities of water tends to dilute the body's fluids, while the body continues to lose salt. **Transient heat fatigue** is a temporary state of physical and mental discomfort caused by prolonged heat exposure. Symptoms include declines in task performance, coordination, and alertness.

Heat Safety Tips

- Don't wear dark, tight-fitting clothes
- Don't eat heavy meals before working in the heat
- Cover as much of your body as possible to avoid direct sun exposure
- Keep drinking water close by
- Avoid alcohol and caffeinated drinks
- Acknowledge and address symptoms of heat-related health problems

