

# BEAT THE HEAT

**Summer time is here** and with it come the ugly, high temperatures that most of us do not enjoy. Although it's an occasion to have fun and spend time outdoors, people should also take precautionary measures to protect their health and their families. This summer you can "beat the heat" by taking simple steps to avoid heat illnesses that can harm you.



## Heat illnesses:

(click for additional information)

- [Heat stroke](#)
- [Heat exhaustion](#)
- [Heat cramps](#)
- [Sunburn](#)
- [Heat rash](#)



Heat illnesses occur when the body is unable to properly cool itself. The body normally cools itself by sweating; but sometimes sweating just isn't enough. Having a fever, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn or being dehydrated also limits the body's ability to control body temperature.

## People at risk

Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others.

- Infants and children up to four years
- People 65 years of age or older
- People who are overweight
- People who over exercise
- People who are ill or who take certain medications



# HOT TIPS

- ☀ **Drink plenty of fluids.** During hot weather you will need to increase the fluids you drink, regardless of your activity level. Don't wait until you're thirsty because by then your body's water supply is already lower than it should be. Don't drink liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol or large amounts of sugar – these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Don't forget about your pets, they need fresh water too!
- ☀ **Replace salt and minerals.** Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. These are necessary for you to stay healthy. A sports drink can replace the salt and minerals however, if you are on a low-salt diet, talk to your doctor before drinking a sport beverage.
- ☀ **Wear appropriate clothing and sunscreen.** Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. If you go outside protect yourself with a hat (such as a straw hat) and sunglasses. Thirty minutes before going outside, you should also apply sunscreen with a SPF 15 or higher rating.
- ☀ **Schedule outdoor activities carefully.** Try to limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours. Rest often in shady areas so that your body's thermostat will have a chance to recover.
- ☀ **Pace yourself.** If you are not used to working or exercising in hot conditions, don't over do it. If you find yourself gasping for breath, STOP all activity. Get into a cool area or at least into the shade and rest.
- ☀ **Stay cool indoors.** Try to stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to a shopping mall or public library. Even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler. Electric fans do not lower your body temperature nor cool the air, they only circulate hot air. Taking a cool shower or bath can help you cool off as well.
- ☀ **Use a buddy system.** When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Heat illnesses can cause confusion and a loss of consciousness.
- ☀ **Monitor those at high risk.** Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants, young children and the elderly need much more frequent watching. Check with your doctor to see if certain medications can also increase sensitivity to the heat.
- ☀ **Adjust to the environment.** Be aware that any sudden change in temperature can affect your body. Limit your physical activity till you become used to the heat.

# HEAT STROKE

Heat stroke happens when the body is not able to control its temperature. The body's temperature rises quickly and it is unable to create sweat to cool down on its own. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.



## Warning signs:

Hot, dry, red skin  
No sweating  
Dilated pupils  
Loss of consciousness  
Nausea

Very high temperature  
Rapid heart beat  
Confusion  
Throbbing headache  
Dizziness



## Treatment:

If someone has two or more signs of heat stroke, **GET EMERGENCY CARE IMMEDIATELY!**  
**HEAT STROKE CAN BE FATAL!!**

- ☀ Call or have someone else call 911.
- ☀ Perform CPR if the person is not breathing **and** does not have a pulse
- ☀ Until emergency care arrives, lower the body temperature by:
  1. Moving the person to a cool, shady place or air conditioned area.
  2. Using cooling techniques (stop if the person begins to shiver)
    - Sponge person with towels soaked in cold water
    - Spray the person with cool water
    - Wrap the person in a cool, wet sheet and fan vigorously
    - Put ice-packs or cold towels on the neck and under arm pits
    - Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath
  3. Check body temperature and continue cooling efforts, if needed.
- ☀ If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.

# HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion is milder than a heat stroke. It can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and not enough or unbalanced replacement of fluids. The elderly, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment have the greatest risk of getting heat exhaustion. If heat exhaustion is not treated it may lead to heat stroke. Seek medical attention immediately.



## Warning signs:

Paleness	Heavy sweating
Muscle cramps	Tiredness
Weakness	Dizziness
Headache	Nausea or vomiting
Fainting	Dry mouth
Weak or rapid pulse	

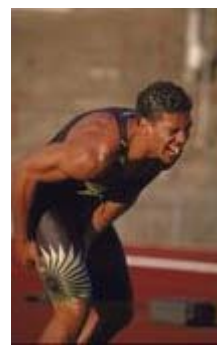


## Treatment:

- ☀ Move to a cool place indoors or in the shade
- ☀ Drink cool water or other sport drinks.
- ☀ Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing
- ☀ Rest
- ☀ Sponge bath a person with towels soaked in cold water
- ☀ Spray the person with cool water

# HEAT CRAMPS

Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms which usually happen in the abdomen, arms or legs and during heavy activity. People who sweat a lot during heavy activity are more likely to get heat cramps because this sweating uses up the body's salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes painful cramps. If you have heart problems or are on a low-sodium diet, seek medical attention. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

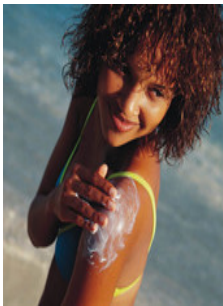


## Treatment:

- ☀ Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place
- ☀ Drink clear juice or a sports beverage
- ☀ Do not return to heavy activity for a few hours after the cramps end because further activity may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- ☀ Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not end in 1 hour.

# SUNBURN

Sunburn should be avoided because it damages the skin. Sunburn may be present if the person has been in the sun and the skin is red, painful and abnormally warm. Twenty to 30 minutes before going outdoors, use sunscreen with a SPF 15 or higher rating on all uncovered areas of the skin. About one ounce of sunscreen should be applied on the arms, legs, neck and face of the average adult. Less is needed for a child. For best results, most sunscreens need to be reapplied about every two hours. If swimming or sweating, don't forget to reapply sunscreen to stay protected. Sunscreen usually rubs off when you towel yourself dry. "Waterproof" sunscreens usually protect you for about 80 minutes even when swimming or sweating. Products that are "water resistant" may provide protection for about 40 minutes. Be sure to check the expiration date on the sunscreen. Use lipbalm with a SPF 15 or higher rating. Do not use sunscreens on babies younger than 6 months. Instead, use hats, clothing and shading to protect small babies from the sun. Consult a doctor if the person who has the sunburn:



- ☀ is younger than 1 year of age
- ☀ has fever
- ☀ has fluid-filled blisters
- ☀ is in severe pain



## Treatment:

- ☀ Avoid repeated sun exposure
- ☀ Apply cold towel or soak the sunburned area in cool water
- ☀ Apply moisturizing lotion to the areas. Do not use salve, butter or ointments
- ☀ Do not break blisters



# HEAT RASH

A heat rash is a skin irritation caused by too much sweating during hot, humid weather. It can occur at any age but is most common in young children. It looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. Heat rashes are usually found on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breast and in elbow creases.



## Treatment:

- ☀ Move to a cooler, less humid environment
- ☀ Keep the affected area dry. Powder may be used to increase comfort. Avoid ointments or creams – they keep the skin warm and moist and may make the heat rash worse.

## Call your doctor if:

- ☀ Heat rash does not go away on its own or within a few days.
- ☀ You develop an infection in an area where you recently had a heat rash or where the bumps have burst.

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