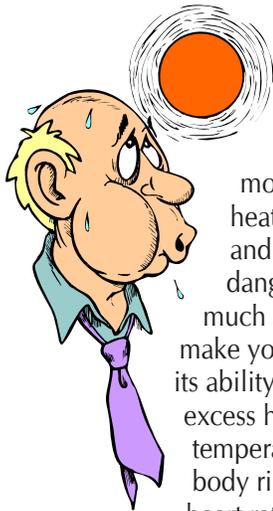


Recognizing and Treating Heat-Related Disorders



The more you work — or play — on a hot day, the more your body heats up inside, and that can be dangerous. Too much activity can make your body lose its ability to dispose of excess heat. The core temperature of the body rises and the heart rate increases.

Here are the types of heat-related disorders, and what you can do to help someone in distress:

Heat Stroke: Heat stroke is the most severe form of heat illness and is a life-threatening emergency. It is the result of long, extreme exposure to the sun in which a person does not sweat enough to lower their body temperature. The elderly, infants and those who work outdoors are highly susceptible. Certain types of medications also make individuals more susceptible to heat stroke.

Symptoms of heat stroke include: headache; dizziness; disorientation, agitation or confusion; fatigue; seizure; hot, dry skin that is flushed but not sweaty; high body temperature; rapid heart rate; and hallucinations.

Call for immediate medical help, then move the victim to a cool, shaded area. Loosen or remove clothing, give cool

beverages (no caffeine or alcohol), cool the skin with cool, wet cloths. Fan vigorously until medical help arrives.

Heat Exhaustion: Heat exhaustion is a lesser form of heat stroke and can become heat stroke if not treated immediately. It is caused by heat and dehydration. Symptoms include: thirst, fatigue, headache, nausea, dizziness, light-headedness, increased breathing rate, decreased alertness and increased internal temperature.

Move the victim to a cool, shaded area. Loosen or remove clothing, give cool beverages (no caffeine or alcohol), cool the skin with cool, wet cloths, misting or a fan. If the victim vomits or faints, seek medical treatment.

Heat Cramps: Heat cramps are associated with lack of fluid, heat and lack of physical conditioning. Usually muscles used for work are affected, but cramps may occur later. They are painful but not life threatening. Drinking liquids should relieve cramps, but intravenous saline solution may be necessary.

Fainting: When people stand for a long time in a hot environment they aren't used to, they may faint. Moving around is better than standing in one place. After fainting, the victim should lie down and rest.

Heat Rash: When sweat is trapped under the skin, small, red bumps may appear that itch and burst to release sweat. See a doctor if they get infected.

Preventing a Heat-Related Disorder

If you can't avoid strenuous physical activity on a hot day, you can reduce your risk of heat stress following these easy steps:

Drink plenty of water before, during and after exposure to the heat. Doctors recommend drinking at least one big glass of water every hour during a very hot day.

Mist yourself with a spray bottle.

Wear light colored, loose fitting clothes that let your body breathe and cool itself.

Wear sunglasses and use an umbrella. Wearing a hat can shield you from the sun, but when you feel hot, take the hat off. It keeps heat trapped inside your body.

Limit your outdoor physical activity on hot days. Don't overdo it. Heat stroke can set in after less than an hour of exposure. If you feel yourself getting overheated or light-headed, take time out and rest in the shade.



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