

Did You Know?

Annually nearly 400 people die from heat stroke and 675 people, on average, die from more severe heat stress illnesses in the United States each year. Understanding the signs and symptoms of heat-related stress decreases the risk factors.

Prevention

Heat stress requires the understanding of heat safety, which has four main conditions that range in severity according to the level of exertion and the environment:

- Heat Rash - Also referred to as “Prickly Heat” and occurs when sweat cannot evaporate from the skin and the skin ducts become plugged:
 - Blisters
 - Red lumps
 - Prickly skin or intense itching
 - Less common, deeper in the skin layer, sweat can leak out of a sweat gland and into the skin causing flesh-colored lesions

First Aid for Heat Rash

- Wear breathable and loose fitting clothing.
 - When it is hot, stay in the shade as much as possible.
 - Avoid heavy exertion, extreme heat, sun exposure and high humidity when possible. If you cannot avoid these conditions, take the following preventive measures:
 - Gradually build up and acclimate yourself to heavy work.
 - Schedule heavy work at the coolest part of the day.
 - Take more breaks when doing heavier work, and in high heat/humid conditions (take breaks in the shade).
 - Drink water frequently and drink enough water so that you do not become thirsty.
- Heat Cramps – This involves the loss of salt and water. Symptoms of heat cramps include:
 - Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs

First Aid for Heat Cramps:

- Stop all activity and sit in a cool place.
 - Drink clear juice or a sports beverage, or drink water with food (avoid salt tablets).
 - Do not return to strenuous work for a few hours after the cramps subside.
 - Replenish salts after heavy sweating.
- Heat Exhaustion – This condition is the body’s response to an excessive loss of water and salt, most commonly through sweating. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:
 - Rapid heart beat
 - Heavy sweating
 - Extreme weakness or fatigue
 - Dizziness
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Irritability
 - Fast, shallow breathing
 - Slightly elevated body temperature

First Aid for Heat Exhaustion:

- Do not leave the individual alone.
 - Rest in a cool area.
 - Drink plenty of water or electrolytes.
 - Treat for shock if necessary.
- Heat Stroke – This condition occurs when your body becomes unable to control its temperature and can result in death or permanent injury. Symptoms of heat stroke include:
 - High body temperature greater than 105 degrees
 - Mental Confusion
 - Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
 - Throbbing headache
 - Seizures or coma
 - Death can occur unless promptly treated

First Aid for Heat Stroke:

- Begin with requesting immediate medical assistance.
- Move the person to a cool, shaded area out of the hot environment.
- Remove excess clothing and apply cool water to the body.