



HEAT STRESS IS SERIOUS

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Working in a hot environment, such as a construction site, puts stress on the body's cooling system. When heat is combined with other work stresses – like hard physical labor, loss of fluids, or fatigue – it may lead to heat-related illness, disability or even death. There are three stages to heat-related illness: heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat cramps are painful, brief muscle cramps that are brought on because the body has lost minerals through sweating. If cramping occurs, move to a cool area at once. Loosen clothing and drink cool water or an electrolyte replacement beverage. Seek medical aid if the cramps are severe, or don't go away.

Heat exhaustion can occur after you've been exposed to high temperatures for several days and have become dehydrated. Symptoms include confusion, dizziness, headache, fatigue and sometimes nausea. Without proper intervention, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke. If you experience heat exhaustion, get out of the heat immediately and rest, preferably in an air-conditioned environment. If you can't get inside, try to find the nearest cool and shady place. Slowly drink fluids. If possible, lie down with your feet and legs slightly elevated.

Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat illness and is a medical emergency. It often occurs after heat cramps or heat exhaustion are not properly cared for. But it can strike even if you have no previous signs of heat illness.

Heat stroke can kill, or cause damage to the brain and other internal organs. Symptoms are similar to heat exhaustion, but the skin is hot and dry and breathing is deep and fast. The victim may collapse. The body is no longer able to sweat, and the body temperature rises dangerously. If you suspect that someone is a victim of heat stroke – also known as sun stroke – call 911 immediately. Move the victim to a cool area and remove excess clothing while waiting on help to arrive. Fan and spray them with cool water. Offer sips of water if the victim is conscious.

There are things you can do to prevent heat-related illnesses.

- Drink plenty of fluids. Consider beverages that replace electrolytes. Stay away from beverages with caffeine. Caffeine contributes to dehydration.
- Slow down in hot weather. Your body's temperature-regulating system faces a much greater workload when the temperature and humidity are high.
- If possible, get accustomed to the heat gradually.
- Dress for hot weather. Light colored clothing reflects heat.
- Get out of the heat occasionally. Take breaks in a cool, shady location.
- Eat light, cool meals.

[Download the recording form here.](#)