



# Heat Stress

As outside temperatures rise, so does the risk for heat-related illnesses. Whether you're outdoors for leisure or work, it's important to know how to prevent and treat heat stress, and know when to seek medical attention.

To prevent heat-related illness, avoid doing strenuous activities outdoors during the hottest parts of the day. Drink lots of fluids and wear light, loose-fitting clothing. If you experience heat-related illness, lie down in a cool place, elevate your legs and use wet cloths to cool yourself. Call for medical help if your symptoms don't improve.

## Overview of heat-related illnesses

As your body temperature rises, a progression of symptoms provide warning signs that you need to cool down.

**Heat cramps** are often the first signal that your body is having trouble managing the heat. Caused by the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating, these muscle pains and spasms typically occur in the legs or abdomen. Move to a cooler location and sip cool water unless you're feeling sick to your stomach.

**Heat syncope** refers to fainting, dizziness or light-headedness that can occur due to high temperatures, prolonged standing and dehydration. This should be treated by sitting or lying down in a cool place and slowly drinking water, juice or a sports drink.

**Heat exhaustion** usually occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place. Because of high humidity or too many layers of clothing, sweat doesn't evaporate as it should, so the body doesn't cool properly. Blood flow to the skin increases, decreasing blood flow to vital organs. This causes a form of shock. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist, pale, flushed or red skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal.

To treat heat exhaustion, have the victim lie down in a cooler place. Loosen or remove clothing and cool him or her with wet cloths. Fan the victim and give him or her sips of cool water. Seek medical attention if he or she starts vomiting.

**Heat stroke**, also called sunstroke, is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweat to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body isn't cooled quickly. Symptoms include hot, red and dry skin; changes in consciousness, confusion or hallucinations; slurred speech or dizziness; throbbing headache; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high - sometimes higher than 105° F.

If you think someone might have heat stroke, call 911 or take him or her to a hospital immediately. Try to cool the victim with a wet sheet, fans or air conditioners. Monitor the victim's breathing until medical help arrives.



## Taking precautions with closed vehicles

Even on a cool day – even with the window cracked open – the temperature inside an automobile can rise to dangerous levels very quickly. Never leave a child or pet in a car. It's always worth the extra time and effort to take your child or pet inside with you.

Prevent children from entering your car without your knowledge. Keep your doors and trunk locked at all times, and keep your keys out of your child's reach.

## How long does it take for a parked car to get too hot?

| If the outside temperature is . . . | Time the car sits . . . | Temperature inside the car . . . |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 75° F                               | 10 minutes              | 100° F                           |
| 75° F                               | 30 minutes              | 120° F                           |
| 85° F                               | 5 minutes               | 90° F                            |
| 85° F                               | 7 to 10 minutes         | 100° F                           |
| 85° F                               | 30 minutes              | 120° F                           |
| 100° F                              | 15 minutes              | 140° F                           |

## HOT SLANG

### Heat wave, heat index -- what do these hot terms mean?

**Heat wave:** More than 48 hours of high heat (90° F or higher) and high humidity (80% relative humidity or higher) are expected.

**Heat index:** A number in degrees Fahrenheit that tells how hot it really feels with the heat and humidity. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15° F.



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