

# Know the FACTS

## Preventing Heat Illness

When temperatures and heat indexes soar, extra precautions are necessary to protect your health. Two serious forms of heat illness are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Both can affect anyone but are preventable with the right steps.

### What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion or heat stress is the overheating of the body due to excessive loss of water. It can be caused by prolonged exposure to hot temperatures, limited fluid and/or insufficient dietary salt intake. Anyone can develop heat exhaustion during hot weather. Certain situations can lead to heat exhaustion more readily: long stretches of hot days, recent illness, heavy/restrictive clothing, or working in a hot environment.



### Heat exhaustion warning signs and symptoms

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

### What is heat stroke?

Unlike heat exhaustion, heat stroke can be fatal. The key sign of heat stroke is the loss of the ability to sweat, which happens when body temperature reaches 105 degrees. At this point, the body's brain and organ tissues begin to die. The primary cause of heat stroke is ignoring heat exhaustion.

### Heat stroke warning signs and symptoms

Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Call 911 immediately if you or someone else shows any of the following symptoms:

- Loss of ability to sweat
- Red, hot and dry skin
- Fast or slow heart rate
- Confusion or loss of concentration
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

### What to do if someone shows signs of any heat illness

- If the individual is unconscious, has a seizure or has stopped sweating **they may be suffering from heat stroke and you should call 911.**
- Move anyone affected by extreme heat out of the sun and to a cooler location immediately, preferable an air conditioned one.
- Loosen or remove clothing.
- Apply ice packs to the neck, groin and armpits.
- Give 1 to 2 quarts of clear fluids, such as water or sports drink.



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## Tips for preventing heat illness

- Drink plenty of water. Don't wait until you're thirsty – your body may already be dehydrating.
- Plan outdoor activities for the early morning or late afternoon. If you feel lightheaded or dizzy, stop what you are doing and go inside.
- Apply sunscreen. Skin cannot sweat through sunburn.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and hats that allow air flow.
- Avoid or limit food and beverages that promote fluid loss, such as caffeine or alcohol.
- Never leave anybody, especially children or pets, unattended in a locked car during hot weather. Car temperatures rise rapidly and can be deadly in minutes.
- Check in on at-risk individuals, such as older adults, people with health conditions, or those without air conditioning.

## Tips for working or exercising in extreme heat

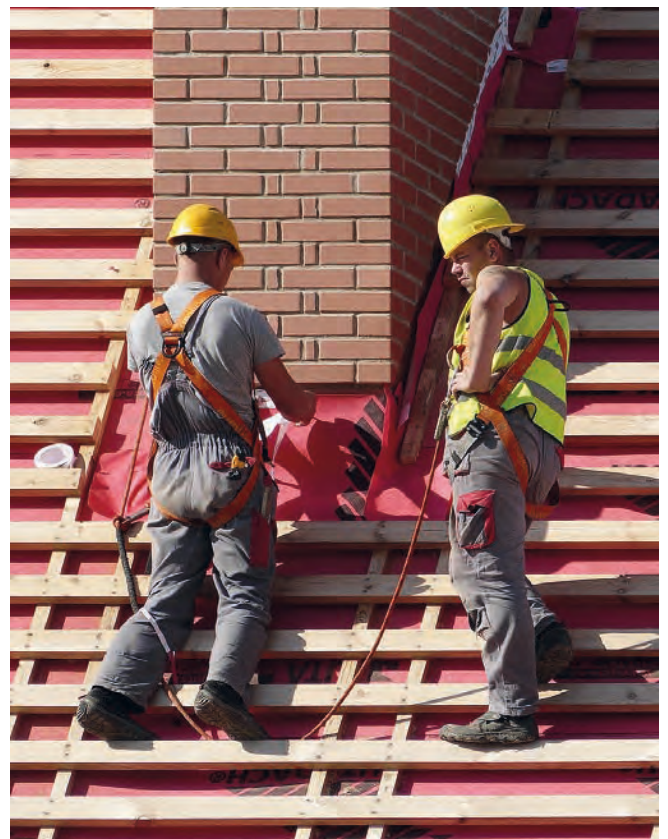
- Pace yourself when working or exercising in a hot environment.
- If you're not accustomed to the heat, start slowly and increase your pace and heat exposure gradually.
- If exertion makes your heart pound or leaves you gasping for breath, stop all activity immediately, and move to a cool area or at least into the shade.
- Frequently rest, especially if you feel lightheaded, confused, weak, or faint.

## Who is at risk?

Anyone can be affected by heat illness. Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 years of age and older, people who are overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

## Additional resources

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** [cdc.gov/niosh/heat-stress/about/illnesses](https://cdc.gov/niosh/heat-stress/about/illnesses)



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