

It's Too Hot!

Keeping Your Cool When It's Hot Outside



Summer weather means getting outside and having fun. But too much heat can cause you to get sick. Heat illness can occur when your body cannot cool down. Read this information to find out how to keep your cool when it's hot outside.

What is heat illness?

Your body normally cools down by sweating. During extremely hot weather, when sweating isn't enough to cool your body, your body can become overheated to the point that you become ill. Heat illness can cause you to become very sick, and could even cause death.

Who is more likely to be affected by the heat?

Some people are more likely to get sick from heat than others including:

- Young children age four years and younger
- Adults age 65 years and older
- People who are overweight
- People who have existing medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart problems, lung problems, or mental illness
- People who take certain medications, such as those for high blood pressure or poor circulation. Ask your doctor if your medication could cause you to be affected by heat.
- People who work in hot places such as construction sites or restaurant kitchens

How can I avoid heat illness?

- Stay cool! Use an air conditioner or go to a cool place such as a basement, neighbor's house, shopping mall or cooling center. Spending even a few hours a day in air conditioning can help reduce your risk for heat illness.
- Use a fan only when the windows are open or the air conditioner is on. Fans will not prevent heat-illness when the temperature is in the high 90s.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Keep shades and curtains closed to block the sun from coming in your home or office.
- Avoid exercising and physical activity during the hottest part of the day. Mornings and evenings are usually cooler than mid-day.
- Stay out of the sun. If you must be in the sun, wear thin and light-colored clothing, a hat and sunglasses. Wear sunscreen (at least SPF15) and reapply it every two hours, after swimming or exercising.
- Check on family members, neighbors and friends at least once a day. Move them to a cool place if necessary.
- **Never, ever** leave children, the elderly or pets in parked cars. Cars heat up very quickly and can become dangerous, even with the windows open.



Drink plenty of fluids!

- Drink lots of water, even if you are not thirsty.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugary drinks such as soda pop.



It's very important to keep cool when the heat index is above 100°!

The National Weather Service issues heat advisories and warnings when the heat index is expected to rise to a dangerous level. The **heat index** combines high temperatures and humidity to let you know how hot it feels outside.

- ▶ A **heat advisory** is issued when the heat index is expected to be at least 100° for three hours or more.
- ▶ A **heat warning** is issued when the heat index is expected to be at least 105° for three hours or more.

Check the signs, symptoms of heat illness. If necessary, follow these first aid steps.

| Heat Illness | Symptoms | First Aid |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Sunburn | Swelling, pain and redness of skin, blisters, fever, headaches. | Apply cool cloths to the burned area or put in cool water (not cold). Apply moisturizing lotion. Do not use salve, butter or ointment. Do not break blisters. Get medical attention for sunburned babies less than 1 year old. |
| Heat Cramps | Muscle pain, heavy sweating. | Stop all activity for a few hours. Drink water, clear juice or a sports beverage. Get medical attention if cramps do not go away within 1 hour. |
| Heat Exhaustion | Heavy sweating, cramps, tiredness, weakness, headache, cool and moist skin, fast and weak pulse, fast breathing, nausea, fainting. | Get the person out of the sun, lay them down and loosen their clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Give sips of a cool, non-alcoholic drink. Get medical help right away if the person is an infant, the elderly or if the person has an existing medical condition. You should also get medical help right away if the symptoms worsen or last longer than 1 hour. Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke! |
| Heat Stroke | Skin that feels hot and dry but not sweaty. High body temperature (above 103°) Rapid, strong pulse. Throbbing headache. Dizziness, nausea, confusion, unconsciousness. | Call 911 and get medical help right away! Heat stroke can cause death. Move the person into a shady area and put them in a tub of cool water, shower them with a garden hose, or use any other method to cool them rapidly. Do not give the person alcohol to drink. |

For more information, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/ExtremeHeat/>

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Michigan Committee for Severe Weather Awareness