

## How to Recognize and Treat Heat Emergencies

Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke are conditions caused by overexposure to heat. Heat cramps are the least severe but, if not cared for, may be followed by heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat exhaustion and heat stroke are heat-related illnesses. Generally, illnesses caused by overexposure to extreme temperatures are preventable. To prevent heat emergencies from happening to you or anyone you know, follow these guidelines:

- Avoid being outdoors in the hottest part of the day.
- Change your activity level according to the temperature.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Dress appropriately for the environment.
- Drink large amounts of fluids before, during, and after activity.

The easiest way to prevent illness caused by temperature extremes is to avoid being outside during the part of the day when temperatures are most extreme.

### Heatstroke

#### The signals of heatstroke include—

hot, red skin which can be dry, or moist from exercise;  
changes in consciousness;  
rapid, weak pulse;  
rapid, shallow breathing, vomiting.

A person experiencing heatstroke can have a very high body temperature—sometimes as high as 106°F (41° C).

#### What to do for heat stroke—

**Heatstroke is a life-threatening situation. If you suspect someone is suffering from heatstroke, call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number immediately:**

1. Move the person to a cool place.
2. Loosen tight clothing.
3. Remove perspiration-soaked clothing.
4. Apply cool, wet cloths to the skin.
5. Fan the person.
6. If conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink.
7. Place the person on his or her side.
8. Continue to cool the person by using ice or cold packs on the wrists, ankles, groin, and neck and in the armpits.
9. Continue to check breathing and circulation.

**Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine because they can cause further dehydration, making conditions worse. Ensure 9-1-1 or the local emergency number is called if the person refuses water, vomits or starts to lose consciousness.**

### Heat Exhaustion

#### The signals of heat exhaustion include—

cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin;  
heavy sweating;

headache;  
nausea, dizziness, and exhaustion;  
normal or below normal body temperature.

**What to do for heat exhaustion—If you suspect someone is suffering from heat exhaustion;**

1. Move the person to a cooler place;
2. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets soaked in water.
3. If the person is conscious, give him or her cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.
4. Let the person rest in a comfortable position; and
5. Watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

**Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine because they can cause further dehydration, making conditions worse.**

**Heat Cramps**

Heat cramps are muscle spasms that are caused by excessive sweating that results in a deficiency of salt. Although not as serious as heat exhaustion or heatstroke, heat cramps sometimes precede them. **If someone is suffering from heat cramps, move the person to a cooler place** and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. Lightly stretch and gently massage the affected muscle and replenish fluids. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.

**Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine because they can cause further dehydration, making conditions worse.**