



## Extreme Heat

### What happens to the body during extreme heat?

The body's temperature control system can become overloaded. When the humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Very high temperatures can damage the brain or other vital organs.

### Who is most at risk?

Infants and children up to age 4, people 65 and older, overweight people and people who are ill or on certain medications are the most vulnerable to heat-related illness.

### Why are children over 4 years of age also at risk?

Children have a high metabolic rate and therefore produce more heat. Also, their capacity to sweat is not as great, so it is more difficult for them to release heat. The effects of dehydration are greater in children.

### Are there certain children to monitor even more carefully?

Yes, children with diabetes, anorexia, obesity, developmental delays, cystic fibrosis, heart disease and diarrhea are at an even greater risk.



### What should be done to protect children's health when temperatures and humidity are high?

Keep the children cool and use common sense:

- be sure children drink plenty of fluids (non-caffeinated)—even more than their thirst indicates
- wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing
- stay cool indoors and if possible, stay in an air-conditioned place
- electric fans provide comfort by increasing evaporation, however when the conditions are extreme, fans will not prevent heat-related illness
- keep physical activity to an absolute minimum
- draw blinds/curtains to prevent radiant heat from entering classrooms

### How will I know how to treat a condition caused by extreme heat?

On the reverse side of this fact sheet you will find a table to assist you in recognizing conditions caused by extreme heat, symptoms to look for and how you can prevent these conditions from occurring.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Cause</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Prevention</b>
Heat Rash	Hot, humid environment; plugged sweat glands.	Red, bumpy rash; severe itching.	Change into dry clothes; rinse skin with cool water.	Wash regularly, keeping skin clean and dry.
Heat Cramps	Heavy sweating depleting body's salt causing painful cramps in the muscles.  May also be a sign of heat exhaustion.	Muscle pain or spasm, normally in the legs, arms or abdomen. May be associated with activity.	Stop all activity; sit quietly in cool place; drink clear juice or sports drink; wait a few hours after cramps subside before resuming activity or it may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke; Seek medical attention if cramps do not subside in 1 hr or if a person has heart problems or is on a low-sodium diet.	Avoid strenuous activity during times of high heat and humidity. Maintain fluid levels.
Fainting	Lack of blood flow to the head, causing loss of consciousness.	Cool moist skin; weak pulse.	GET MEDICAL ATTENTION - assess need for CPR; move to cool area; loosen clothing; make person lie down; offer sips of water.	Reduce activity levels and heat exposure. Drink fluids regularly.
Heat Exhaustion	Inadequate salt and fluid intake causes body's cooling system to start to break down.	Heavy sweating; cool moist skin; muscle cramps; weakness; headache; nausea; body temperature over 38 C; weak pulse; normal or low blood pressure.	GET MEDICAL ATTENTION; cool shower, bath or sponge bath; rest; loosen clothing; cool beverages; fan and spray with cool water or move to air-conditioned environment; offer sips of water.	Reduce activity level; maintain fluid levels.
Heat Stroke	Body's salt and water is depleted; sweating stops; and body temperature rises.	High body temperature over 41 C; red, hot and dry skin; no sweating; rapid, strong pulse; headache; confusion; dizziness; nausea.	GET MEDICAL ATTENTION:immediately  COOL BODY RAPIDLY - immerse in cool water; fan, shower or spray with cool water; remove excess clothing; offer sips of water.	Reduce activity levels. Maintain fluid levels.  Recognize signs and symptoms.

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