

EXTREME HEAT

Heat kills by pushing the human body beyond its limits. In extreme heat and high humidity, evaporation is slowed and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature. When the temperature goes up, our body attempts to cool off through sweating. Many people don't know that, in addition to sweating, blood flow moves toward the skin and away from vital organs. If it's hot and you've been sweating and suddenly your sweating stops, seek immediate medical attention. Not sweating during very high temperatures is a symptom of extreme body distress. Older adults, young children, and those who are sick or overweight are more likely to succumb to extreme heat.

Be ready for the heat

- Find places in your community where you can go to get cool.
- Keep your home cool by doing the following:
 - ◇ Cover windows with drapes or shades.
 - ◇ Weather-strip doors and windows.
 - ◇ Use window reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
 - ◇ Add insulation to keep the heat out.
 - ◇ Use attic fans to clear hot air.
 - ◇ Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.
 - ◇ Learn to recognize the signs of heat-related illness.

Be safe during the heat

- Never leave a child, adult, or animal alone inside a vehicle on a warm day.
- Find places with air conditioning. Libraries, shopping malls, and community centers can provide a cool place to take a break from the heat.
- If you're outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. If you or someone you care for is on a special diet, ask a doctor how best to accommodate it.
- Do not use electric fans when the temperature outside is more than 95 degrees, as this could increase the risk of heat-related illness. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature.
- Avoid high-energy activities.
- Check yourself, family members, and neighbors for signs of heat-related illness.

Signs of heat-related illness

HEAT CRAMPS Signs: Muscle pains or spasms in the stomach, arms, or legs Actions: Go to a cooler location. Remove excess clothing. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Get medical help if cramps last more than an hour

HEAT EXHAUSTION Signs: Heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, or fainting. Actions: Go to an air-conditioned place and lie down. Loosen or remove clothing. Take a cool bath. Take sips of cool sports drinks with salt and sugar. Get medical help if symptoms get worse or last more than an hour.

HEAT STROKE Signs: Extremely high body temperature (above 103 degrees) taken orally; red, hot, and dry skin with no sweat; rapid, strong pulse; dizziness; confusion; or unconsciousness. Actions: Call 911 or get the person to a hospital immediately. Cool down with whatever methods are available until medical help arrives.