

# The Symptoms of Heat Disorders

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Heat Disorder	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches.	Take a shower, using soap, to remove oils that may block pores preventing the body from cooling naturally. If blisters occur, apply dry, sterile dressings and get medical attention.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms usually in leg and abdominal muscles. Heavy sweating.	Firm pressure on cramping muscles or gentle massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue.
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating, weakness, skin cold, pale and clammy. Weak pulse. Normal temperature possible. Fainting, vomiting.	Get victim to lie down in a cool place. Loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue. If vomiting occurs, seek immediate medical attention.
Heat Stroke (Sun Stroke)	High body temperature (106+). Hot, dry skin. Rapid, strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Victim will likely not sweat.	Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Call 9-1-1 or emergency medical services or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Move victim to a cooler environment. Try a cool bath or sponging to reduce body temperature. Use extreme caution. Remove clothing. Use fans and/or air conditioners. <b>DO NOT GIVE FLUIDS.</b>

You can help yourself and others avoid experiencing the HEAT DISORDERS (above) by following these safety rules.

## Thinking about Yourself

- **Avoid the Heat.** Stay out of the heat and indoors as much as possible. Spend time in an air conditioned space. Only two hours a day in an air-conditioned space can significantly reduce the risk of heat-related illness. Shopping malls offer relief if your home is not air-conditioned. If air conditioning is not available, stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine. Remember, electric fans do not cool, they just blow hot air around.
- **Dress for the heat.** Wear loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Lightweight, light-colored clothing that reflects heat and sunlight and helps maintain normal body temperature. Protect your face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat. Avoid too much sunshine. Sunburn slows the skin's ability to cool itself. Use a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (sun protection factor) rating.
- **Drink FOR the Heat.** Drink plenty of water and natural juices, even if you don't feel thirsty. Even under moderately strenuous outdoor activity, the rate your body can absorb fluids is less than the rate it loses water due to perspiration. However, if you have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restrictive diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- **Do not drink in the Heat.** Avoid alcoholic beverages and beverages with caffeine, such as coffee, tea, and cola. Alcohol and caffeine constrict blood vessels near the skin reducing the amount of

heat the body can release. Although beer and alcohol beverages appear to satisfy thirst, they actually cause further body dehydration.

- **Eat for the Heat.** Eat small meals more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein because they increase metabolic heat. Avoid using salt tablets, unless directed to do so by a physician.
- **Living in the Heat.** Slow down. Reduce, eliminate, or reschedule strenuous activities such as running, biking and lawn care work when it heats up. The best times for such activities are during early morning and late evening hours. Take cool baths or showers and use cool, wet towels.
- **Learn the symptoms** of heat disorders and know how to give first aid.

## Thinking about Others

- **Do not leave children in a closed vehicle**, even for a few minutes. This is a "No-Brainer". Temperatures inside a closed vehicle can reach 140°F-190°F degrees within 30 minutes on a hot, sunny day. However, despite this common sense rule, deaths from heat occur almost every summer when someone leaves their child in a closed vehicle.



- **Help your pets keep their cool.** It will "feel" as hot for them as it will for you. As with children, do not leave your pets in a closed vehicle. Be sure your animals have access to shade and a water bowl full of cold, clean water. Dogs don't tolerate heat well because they don't sweat. Their bodies get hot and stay hot. During summer heat, avoid outdoor games or jogging with your pet. If you would not walk across hot, sunbaked asphalt barefoot, don't make your dog walk on it either. (Dogs can also get blisters on their paws from hot pavement.)
- **Learn the symptoms** of heat disorders and know how to give first aid.

## Thinking About Your Environment

- **Protect windows.** Hang shades, draperies, awnings, or louvers on windows that receive morning or afternoon sun. Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat entering the house by as much as 80%.
- **Conserve electricity.** During periods of extreme heat, people tend to use a lot more power for air conditioning which can lead to a power shortage or outage. Vacuum air conditioner filters weekly during periods of high use.
- **Keep lights turned down** or turned off.
- **Avoid using the oven.**
- **Learn the symptoms** of heat disorders and know how to give first aid.