

HEAT STRESS

High temperatures and humidity can place special stresses on the body, especially since we tend to spend more time outdoors during warmer weather. Dehydration often results because people tend to wait until they feel thirsty before drinking, but if you wait until you're thirsty . . . it's too late!! By the time you feel thirsty; your body has already lost a great deal of fluids and may even be dehydrated. It can cause fatigue, headache, light-headedness, weakness and other symptoms and it may increase the risk of heat-related illnesses.

Characteristics of people who tend to be most sensitive to heat

☀ Very small body size	☀ High blood pressure
☀ Poor nutrition	☀ Diabetes
☀ Overweight	☀ Skin disease
☀ Previous heat illness	☀ Liver, kidney, and lung problems
☀ Heart disease	☀ Taking certain medications (diuretics, for example)

Know the signs and seek treatment

3 stages of heat-related illness: **heat cramps**, **heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke**.

Heat Cramps: The least serious of the three and usually occur during or after intense physical exercise. Drinking lots of water can usually prevent them.

Heat Exhaustion: The most common, and symptoms of include weak, rapid pulse; low blood pressure; headache; nausea; dizziness; "goose bumps" and weakness. If you have these symptoms, you should stop exercising or working, move to a cooler area and begin drinking fluids.

Heat Stroke: The most serious heat illness and requires immediate medical attention. This occurs when the body can no longer regulate its temperature causing it to rise rapidly. Heat stroke can be fatal or cause permanent disability and requires emergency help immediately. Symptoms include extremely high body temperature, skin that is hot, red and dry with no sweating, rapid and strong pulse, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion and unconsciousness.

Tips for Getting Enough Fluids

- ☼ Keep a glass or bottle of water with you during the day so you can sip from it often. When you travel, bring your water bottle along. But remember, if you drink from a bottle, thoroughly clean or replace the bottle often.
- ☼ Drink cool water because it's absorbed faster, and you'll usually drink more because it tastes better.
- ☼ Start some of your meals with soup. Soup provides plenty of fluid and can curb your appetite if you're trying to lose weight. Be careful of the sodium levels in canned soups though! If you are on a low-salt diet, choose soups that are lower in sodium.
- ☼ Drink more water, milk and juices and fewer soft drinks. When working or exercising strenuously, a sports drink may be useful for replacing lost electrolytes and providing carbohydrates for energy. But because they add calories, they are not recommended as a major part of daily fluid intake.
- ☼ Drink when you feel thirsty and even when you don't feel thirsty! When exercising or doing other hard physical labor, drink water every 15-20 minutes, even if you're not thirsty.
- ☼ Increase your fluid intake if your diet is high in fiber, protein or salt.
- ☼ Some beverages, especially those containing caffeine, may lead to a loss of body water.

Sun Protection

Overexposure to the sun's invisible rays can cause skin damage. Two kinds of ultraviolet sun rays, UVA and UVB, damage the skin. This can range from immediate effects such as burning, rashes, and cell and tissue damage to long-term consequences such as wrinkling and skin cancer. Medical experts believe too much exposure to the sun as a child, teenager or adult is a major cause of skin cancer and premature skin aging. Even people with darker complexions, who have more natural protection, are at risk.

Sun Safety Tips

- ☼ Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when the sun's rays are strongest.
- ☼ Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays and has a Sun Protection Factor of 15 or higher, even on cloudy days.
- ☼ Use a waterproof sunscreen if you will be sweating or swimming.
- ☼ You will get the best protection by applying the correct amount of sunscreen needed about 15 minutes before going out into the sun. Reapply every 2 hours when outdoors, especially when sweating or swimming.
- ☼ Wear protective, tightly woven clothing. Dark colors give more protection. For extended time in the sun, special sun-protective clothing is available labeled with the Ultraviolet Protection Factor.
- ☼ Wear a 4-inch-wide broad-brimmed hat to shade your face.
- ☼ Sunglasses help protect your eyes. Choose sunglasses that screen out both UVA and UVB rays. Sunglasses that are close-fitting to the face and with larger lenses offer more protection.