

Summer Safety Tips to Beat the Heat

The common denominator of heat illness prevention is: Water, Rest, Shade. Getting plenty of all three when outdoors is the best way to beat the heat and stay out of trouble.

Heat Safety Tips

Many Health Services recommends the following actions to stay safe in the summer heat:

- Stay hydrated throughout the day by drinking water steadily; don't wait until you're thirsty.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol which cause us to lose water more rapidly.
- Take frequent breaks in the shade or indoors in an air-conditioned space.
- Wear loose fitting, lightly colored and lightweight clothes.
- Check on friends and neighbors.
- Minimize use of heat-generating appliances like stoves or ovens.
- Do not exercise outdoors. If you must exercise outdoors, only exercise in the early morning hours, before 8 a.m.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check the local news and other outlets for important safety information.

When overheating does occur, it's important to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) identifies four stages of heat-related illness: heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat Rash

Heat Rash is an irritation to the skin caused by sweat buildup. While common, heat rash is usually treatable by getting individuals into a cool environment with good ventilation.

Heat Cramps

Sweating causes a loss of body salts and fluids, which can lead to heat cramps. An individual suffering from muscle spasms or pain due to the heat should move to a cool area, rest and hydrate.

Heat Exhaustion

If the body loses too much water and salt, heat exhaustion may result. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist skin, nausea, headache, dizziness, weakness and rapid pulse. Workers should immediately lie down in a cool area, drink lots of water and apply cold compresses or ice packs if available. If signs of heat exhaustion do not abate or worsen, the individual should go to the emergency room.

Heat Stroke

Heat Stroke is a medical emergency. If an individual suddenly stops sweating and feels hot to the touch, becomes confused, faints or has seizures, call 911 immediately. Place the worker in a cool, shady area, loosen and moisten clothing, apply ice or cold compress; get the individual to drink water if conscious.