



Stewardship of the Body

“I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made” (Ps. 139)

HEAT-RELATED INJURIES

Some heat-related injuries that can occur include:

HEAT STROKE:

What is heat stroke? Heat stroke occurs when the body is unable to regulate its temperature. The temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. The body temperature can rise to 106° or higher within 10-15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if not treated immediately.

What are the symptoms of heat stroke? Symptoms may vary but may include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103° orally)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

How is heat stroke treated?

- Call for medical assistance
- Get the person to a shady area
- Cool the person rapidly using whatever method is available such as: putting the person in a tub of cool water or a cool shower, spraying with cool water from a garden hose, sponging with cool water, wrapping in a cool, wet sheet, fanning the person vigorously.
- Monitor the body temperature. Continue cooling efforts until the temperature drops to 101-102°.
- If emergency personnel is delayed, call the hospital for further instructions.
- Do not give the person fluids to drink.
- If there is muscle twitching, keep the person from injuring himself, but do not place any object in the mouth and do not give fluids. If there is vomiting, keep the airway open by turning the person to his/her side.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

What is heat exhaustion? Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. It is the body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt contained in sweat. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

What are the warning signs of heat exhaustion?

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting
- Cool & moist skin
- Pulse that is fast & weak
- Breathing that is fast & shallow

What should be done for heat exhaustion?

- Help the person cool off by:
 - Giving cool, nonalcoholic beverages
 - Encouraging rest
 - Giving a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath
 - Getting into an air-conditioned environment
 - Removing heavy clothing/providing lightweight clothing
- If symptoms get worse or last longer than one hour, call for medical attention

HEAT CRAMPS

What are heat cramps? Heat cramps are muscle pains or spasms, usually in the abdomen, arms or legs, that may occur in association with strenuous activity.

What causes heat cramps? When there is a lot of sweating, it can deplete the body's salt & moisture. This results in a low salt level in the muscles and they begin to cramp. Heat cramps can be a sign of heat exhaustion.

What should be done for heat cramps?

- If the person has heart problems or is on a low-sodium diet, get medical attention
- Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage
- Stay away from strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps go away, because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- If they do not go away within an hour, get medical attention.

SUNBURN

You know it's sunburn when the skin becomes red, painful, and abnormally warm after sun exposure.

What should be done?

- Avoid repeated sun exposure
- Apply cold compresses or immerse the sunburned area in cool water
- Apply moisturizing lotion to affected areas. Do not use salve, butter or ointment.
- Do not break blisters
- If the sunburn affects an infant younger than 1 year of age or if the person has a fever and fluid-filled blisters, consult a doctor.

Source: http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.asp