

KNOW THE FACTS!

Heat

When temperatures reach the upper 90s and into the 100s for even a short period of time, residents need to take extra precautions with their health. Two common problems involved with extreme heat are heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

What is Heat Exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion or heat stress is the overheating of the body due to excessive loss of water. It can be caused by prolonged exposure to hot temperatures, limited fluid and/or insufficient dietary salt intake. Anyone can develop heat exhaustion during hot weather. Certain situations can lead to heat illness more readily; long stretches of hot days, recent illness, heavy/restrictive clothing, or working 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

If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

What is Heat Stroke?

Heat stroke, opposed to heat exhaustion, can be fatal. The key sign of heat stroke is the loss of the ability to sweat, which happens when body temperature reaches 105 degrees. At this point, the body's brain and organ tissues begin to die. The primary cause of heat stroke is ignoring heat exhaustion.

What are the Symptoms of Heat Stroke?

Symptoms in addition to those for heat exhaustion include:

- Loss of ability to sweat
- Red, hot and dry skin
- Fast or slow heart rate
- Confusion or loss of concentration
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

This is a medical emergency and you should call 911.



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How to Prevent Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke:

- Plan outdoor activities in the early morning or late afternoon. If you feel lightheaded or dizzy stop what you are doing and go inside.
- Apply sunscreen. Skin cannot sweat through sunburn.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and hats that allow air flow.
- Drink plenty of water. Don't wait until you're thirsty – your body may already be dehydrating.
- Avoid food and beverages that promote fluid loss, such as caffeine or alcohol.
- Never leave anybody, especially children, unattended in a locked car during hot weather. Car temperatures rise rapidly and can be deadly in minutes.
- Monitor those at risk such as elderly relatives and neighbors or people who do not have air conditioning.

What should I do if I suspect someone has heat exhaustion or heat stroke?

- Move anyone affected by extreme heat out of the sun and to a cooler location immediately.
- Loosen or remove clothing.
- Apply ice packs to the neck, groin and armpits.
- Give 1 to 2 quarts of fluids.
- If the individual is unconscious, has a seizure or has stopped sweating they may be suffering from heat stroke and you should call 911.

What should I do if I work in a hot environment?

Pace yourself. If you are not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity. Get into a cool area or at least in the shade, and rest, especially if you become lightheaded, confused, weak or faint.

Who is at greatest risk for heat-related illness?

Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 years of age and older, people who are overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

If you have additional questions about heat-related illnesses or would like further information, please contact Hamilton County Public Health at 513-946-7800 or

www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.



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