

Hot Weather Health Issues and Concerns

Extreme heat can lead to serious health issues. While anyone can be a victim of heat-related illness, highest risk groups include people under age 5 or over age 65, people with chronic illnesses, people taking certain medications, and those who are exercising or working outdoors.

PREVENTION



Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Don't wait until you're thirsty. Drink 2-4 glasses (16-32 ounces) of water or fruit juice each hour. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and overly sweetened beverages



Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing



Avoid direct sunlight by staying in the shade. Wear sunscreen, a wide-brimmed hat, and sunglasses.



NEVER leave children or pets in a car. Even with the windows cracked. Even for just a minute.



Check on elderly relatives or neighbors daily. Make sure they have a cool place to be during extreme heat.



Stay in air-conditioning when possible

- If your home is not air-conditioned, consider visiting a shopping mall or public library
- Electric fans will not prevent heat-related illness
- Contact your local health department for cooling center locations
- Marylanders in need of energy assistance should call 2-1-1, Maryland's information and referral service



Avoid salt tablets unless your doctor told you to take them.



Take it easy outdoors. Take short breaks if you feel tired. Schedule physical activity in the morning or evening, when it is cooler.

HEAT CRAMPS



SIGNS

- Muscle pain/spasms
- Caused by loss of water and salt from heavy sweating

TREATMENT

- Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool place
- Drink water, a sports drink, or other drinks with no caffeine or alcohol
- Do not resume activity for a few hours after the cramps go away. Heat cramps can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke
- Get medical help if the cramps do not go away in one hour

HEAT EXHAUSTION



SIGNS

- Dehydration
- Cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin
- Extreme weakness
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Headache
- May vomit or faint

TREATMENT

- Drink fluids
- Rest in a cool, shaded area
- Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or do not improve in an hour

HEAT STROKE



SIGNS

- Body temp. over 105°F
- Dry, red skin
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Convulsions
- Disorientation
- Delirium
- Coma

TREATMENT

- Call 911
- Cool bath or wet towels
- Do not give fluids if the victim refuses water, is vomiting, or has fainted