



Heat Stress

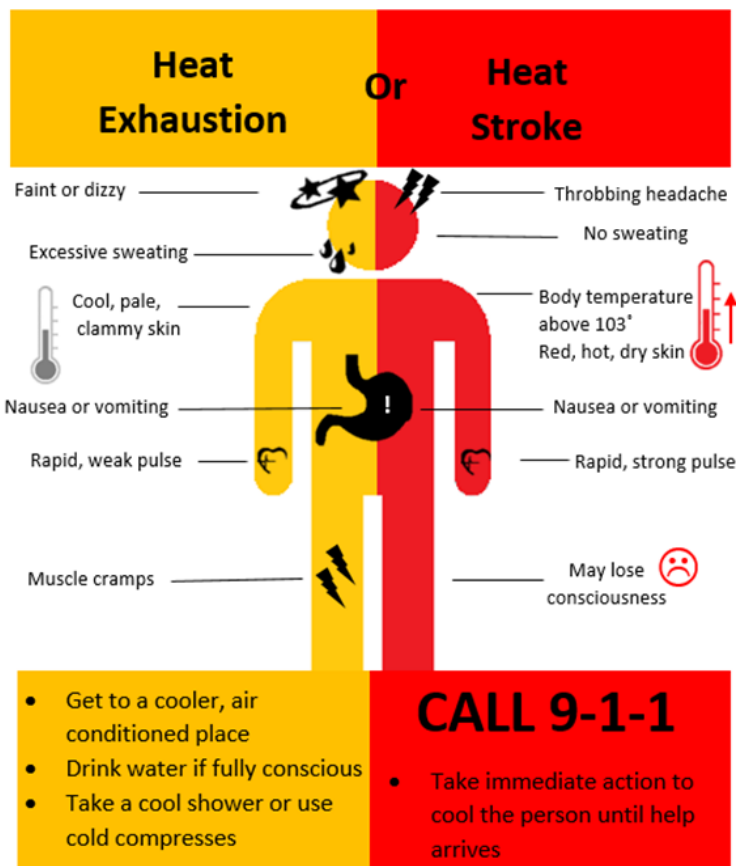


Temperatures are on the rise as we get into the summer months, which increases your risk for a heat-related illness. Everyone will tolerate heat stress differently so it is important to be aware of early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness so preventative measures are taken to minimize the likelihood of heat exhaustion or even worse, heat stroke. Other illnesses, such as heat cramps and heat rash should also be avoided.

Heat Exhaustion vs. Heat Stroke:

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to the excessive loss of water and salt due to sweating. Symptoms include heavy sweating; fast, weak pulse with shallow breathing; paleness; faintness; cramping; tiredness; headache; dizziness; nausea; or vomiting.

Heat stroke occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature; it is the most serious form of heat-related illness and can be fatal. Symptoms include absence of sweating; red, hot, dry skin; rapid, strong pulse; dizziness; nausea; headache; confusion; uncontrolled twitching or unconsciousness.



Prevention:

Acclimation: is the adaptation of an individual's ability to tolerate hot temperatures. A person becomes acclimated when they purposefully expose themselves to hot temperatures for a couple hours a day, increasing their time spent outside each day over one week. New employees and employees returning from an absence should have a five day period of acclimatization.

Hydration: one cup (8 oz.) of water should be consumed every 15-20 minutes

Diet: eat light, non-greasy meals. Alcohol can cause dehydration and should be avoided. Energy drinks contain high caffeine levels which can be risky when added to the strain placed on your body by heat.

Dress: light-weight, light colored, loose-fitting clothing

Work Planning: Schedule the most strenuous tasks early in the day or at a time during the day when the heat index is lower. Take frequent breaks in shaded or cool areas.

Personal Risk Factors: A prior heat related injury, cardiac or kidney disease, pregnancy, obesity, older age and certain medications such as cardiovascular, renal, or blood pressure meds can make a person more susceptible to a heat-related illness.

First Aid:

If you or someone you are working with are exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion, sit down in a cool area and drink plenty of water. Notify your supervisor immediately. If symptoms do not improve, worsen or symptoms of heat stroke are observed, call 911 immediately.

OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool Smartphone App: The app features real-time heat index and hourly forecasts as well as occupational safety and health recommendations from OSHA and NIOSH. This app is a useful resource for planning outdoor work activities based on how hot it feels throughout the day.

