



Heat Stress

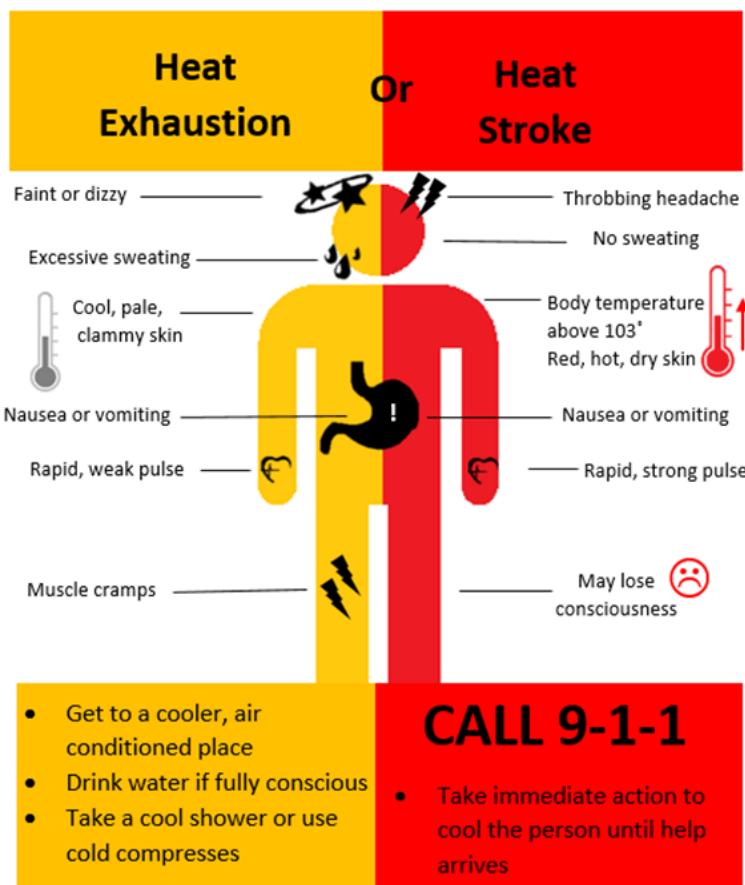


Temperatures are on the rise as we get into the summer months, which increases your risk for a heat-related illness. Everyone will tolerate heat stress differently so it is important to be aware of early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness so preventative measures are taken to minimize the likelihood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

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 adaption 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 and caffeinated drinks such as coffee, soda, and energy drinks dehydrate the body and should be avoided.

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.



OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool
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