

Safety Site
Heat Stroke & Heat Exhaustion
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Recreational Safety takes Responsibility & Control

Heat exhaustion occurs when your body loses excess amounts of water and salt, typically from sweating. On the other hand, heat stroke is a serious medical emergency that occurs when your body is unable to control its internal temperature.

With summer and hotter weather, it is good to be aware of the symptoms and treatment of both heat stroke and heat exhaustion. It can happen to anyone. Whether you are simply mowing the lawn, hiking, playing tennis, golfing, or any other activity, stay hydrated and avoid extended time in the sun on hot days.

Heat exhaustion is often the prologue of a heat stroke. It is the milder condition of the two. When someone becomes overly dehydrated, especially if engaging in a strenuous activity under the heat of the sun, then it is likely they could suffer from heat exhaustion. This occurs when the body has released too much sweat, but is not drinking enough fluids to compensate for those fluid losses. The most noticeable signs of the condition are the following: being thirsty, nauseated, feeling headaches or a little light headed, profuse sweating, muscle cramps and cooling of the skin.

The first response is to move the person to a shadier location or to an air-conditioned room if available. Then elevate his or her feet slightly and apply some cold compress to the neck or armpit regions. Afterwards, they can steadily take some fluids at the interval of 15 minutes to replenish those lost fluids from the body. Half a cup is just enough.

In the case of a heat stroke, the body can no longer use its normal temperature regulation control because it already shut off. Sweating does not help and no longer occurs. The body is then overheating. **The person can even have a comma when left untreated.** Heat stroke is a very serious and potentially dangerous heat injury that requires medical attention immediately. This is the most severe form of heat-related condition that stems from milder illnesses such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion. The medical definition of heat stroke is a core body temperature of **104** degrees Fahrenheit or higher combined with central nervous system complications resulting from overexposure to high temperatures. If you have spent a lot of time in the sun and you're experiencing any of the symptoms below, it is important to seek medical attention immediately. **Call 911.**

10 Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke:

1. Incredibly Hot Skin (A simple sunburn will also present this symptom (red, hot skin) but the situation becomes dangerous when your body temperature stays higher than 104.)
2. Dizziness and Fainting
3. Muscle Cramps and Nausea
4. Throbbing Headache
5. Sweating stops

6. Flushed skin (This is a sudden reddening of the face, neck, and upper chest.)
7. Rapid heart beat
8. Rapid shallow breathing
9. Mental confusion (Experiences like confusion, agitation, irritability, slurred or incoherent speech and delirium may be noticeable.)
10. Seizures

Remember that heat stroke is a medical emergency that requires urgent attention. Once a heat stroke sets in, the body's internal systems start to shut down and several of the organs suffer damage. To prevent further damage the internal temperature needs to be reduced quickly. When heatstroke afflicts anyone the first treatment that should be given is to cool the person. Pouring cold water on the victim's body may help in reducing heat. You may also use a garden hose to put water on the patient. Also fan the victim and apply ice packs around the groin region and under armpits.

If possible, one should try to monitor the body temperature if a thermometer is available and continue with cooling the body of the victim until his/ her body temperature lowers to 101 or 102 Fahrenheit. In case of emergency it is also essential to notify emergency services.

STAY HYDRATED AND USE SUNSCREEN

Some information is courtesy of WebMD