

HEAT EXHAUSTION

What happens to the body:

Headaches, dizziness, or light-headedness, weakness, mood changes, irritability or confusion, feeling sick to your stomach, vomiting, fainting, decreased and dark-colored urine, and pale, clammy skin.

What should be done:

- Move the person to a cool shaded area. Don't leave the person alone. If the person is dizzy or light-headed, lay him on his back and raise his legs about 6-8 inches. If the person is sick to his stomach, lay him on his side.
- Loosen and remove heavy clothing.
- Have the person drink some cool water (a small cup every 15 minutes) if he is not feeling sick to his stomach.
- Try to cool the person by fanning him. Cool the skin with a cool spray mist of water or wet cloth.
- If the person does not feel better in a few minutes call for emergency help (ambulance or call 911.)

(If heat exhaustion is not treated, the illness may advance to heat stroke.)

How to Protect Workers

- Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-induced illnesses and what to do to help the worker.
- Train workers about heat-induced illnesses.
- Perform the heaviest work during the coolest part of the day.
- Slowly build up tolerance to the heat and the work activity (usually takes up to 2 weeks.)
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs.)
- Drink plenty of cool water (one small cup every 15-20 minutes.)
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable (like cotton) clothing.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool, shaded areas (allow your body to cool down.)
- Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages (these beverages make the body lose water and increase the risk of heat illnesses.)

Workers are at increased risk when...

- They take certain medications. Check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacy to see if medicines you take affect you when working in hot environments.
- They have had a heat-induced illness in the past.
- They wear personal protective equipment.

HEAT STROKE - A Medical Emergency

What happens to the body:

Dry, pale skin (no sweating); hot red skin (looks like a sunburn); mood changes; irritability, confusion, and not making any sense; seizures or fits, and collapse (will not respond).

What should be done:

- Call for emergency help (i.e., ambulance or 911.)
- Move the person to a cool, shaded area. Don't leave the person alone. Lay him on his back and if the person is having seizures, remove objects close to him so he won't hit them. If the person is sick to his stomach, lay him on his side.
- Remove heavy and outer clothing.
- Have the person drink some cool water (a small cup every 15 minutes) if he is alert enough to drink anything and not feeling sick to his stomach.
- Try to cool the person by fanning him or her. Cool the skin with a cool spray mist of water, wet cloth, or wet sheet.
- If ice is available, place ice packs in armpits and groin area.

THE HEAT EQUATION

HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL WORK = HEAT ILLNESS

When the body is unable to cool itself through sweating, **serious** heat illnesses may occur. The most severe heat-induced illnesses are **heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke**. If actions are not taken to treat heat exhaustion, the illness could progress to heat stroke and **death**.

