

Heat-Related Problems

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature. The body's temperature rises quickly, but the body is unable to cool down (by sweating). Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not received.

Warning signs of heat stroke may include:


- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F, orally)
- Unconsciousness
- Dizziness, nausea, and confusion
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to losing too much water and salt (through sweat). Those most likely to develop heat exhaustion are elderly people and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Warning signs of heat exhaustion vary, but may include:

- Heavy sweating
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weakness
- Paleness, tiredness, dizziness



Those most likely to develop heat exhaustion are elderly people and people working or exercising in a hot environment

What Can I Do?

If you see any warning signs for heat stroke or heat exhaustion, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the victim:

- Call 911 as soon as possible
- Get the victim to a shady area
- Cool the victim quickly using whatever methods you can:
 - Immerse the victim in a tub of cool water
 - Place him in a cool shower; spray with cool water from a garden hose; sponge with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap the victim in a cool, wet sheet and fan him vigorously
- Monitor body temperature, and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101°-102°F

Sometimes a person's muscles will begin to twitch uncontrollably because of heat stroke. If this happens, keep the victim from injuring himself, but do not place any object in his mouth or give him fluids. If there is vomiting, make sure the airway remains open by turning the victim on his side.



City of Long Beach Department of
Health and Human Services

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Protecting Against Heat Injuries



When the weather gets hot outside, there are steps you and your family can take to prevent heat injuries. To protect your health when temperatures are extremely high...

Use Common Sense

- Do not leave infants, children, or pets inside a parked car
- Stay out of the sun during midday hours and in places where it is very sunny, such as beaches
- Bring your pets indoors with you to protect them; give your outdoor animals plenty of fresh water, leave their water in a shady area, and consider wetting them down
- Avoid hot foods and heavy meals; they add heat to your body

Monitor Those at High Risk

Those at greatest risk of heat-related illness include:

- Infants and children up to four years of age
- People who over-exert during work or exercise
- People 65 years of age or older
- People who are ill or on certain medications
- People who are overweight

People at high risk should drink plenty of fluids, avoid over-exertion, and get a doctor's or pharmacist's advice about medications taken for high blood pressure, depression, nervousness, mental illness, insomnia, or poor circulation.

Follow These Hot Weather Tips

Drink Plenty of Fluids – During hot weather, you will need to drink more liquid than your thirst indicates. This is especially true for those over 65 years of age. Talk to your doctor if you have been prescribed a fluid-restricted diet or diuretics. Avoid drinks containing alcohol, which will cause you to lose more fluid.

Replace Salt and Minerals – Heavy sweating takes salt and minerals out of the body, which it needs and has to replace. The best way to replace salt and minerals is to drink fruit juice or a sports beverage during exercise or any work in the heat.

Wear the Right Clothing – Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. In the hot sun, a wide-brimmed hat will help keep your head cool.

Use Sunscreen – Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool itself and causes a loss of body fluids. Many types of sunscreens are available to reduce the risk of sunburn. Select a sunscreen with an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of 15 or higher.

Stay Cool Indoors – The best way to beat the heat is to stay in an air-conditioned area. If you do not have an air conditioner or cooling unit, think about visiting a shopping mall or public library for a few hours. A cool shower or bath is another way to cool off. If you must be out in the heat, plan your activities so that you are outdoors either before noon or in the evening. While outdoors, rest frequently in a shady area.

Drink 2-4
glasses
(16-32 ounces)
of cool fluids
each hour
while
exercising in
hot weather

Use a Buddy System – When working or exercising in the heat, monitor the condition of those with you and have them do the same for you. If you are 65 years of age or older, have a friend or relative call to check on you twice a day during a heat wave.

Information provided in this brochure may help you recognize and respond quickly to warning signs of trouble, but your best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Staying cool and making simple changes in your fluid intake, activities, and clothing during hot weather can help you remain safe and healthy.



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