

HSS Safety Share

Sun and Heat Exposure



During late spring, summer and through early fall many people like to spend time outside in the sun for both fun and work. But overexposure to the sun can damage the skin and prolonged over-exposures may cause or contribute to skin cancer. Heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash are possible when you become overexerted in the heat. Put your health first in order to enjoy the summer and avoid damaging exposures.

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat to keep your head and face cool. This will also provide added protection from damaging sun exposure. Baseball caps provide little protection except to the face. A hat should protect the neck, face and ears.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt at all times. It should be light colored and loose fitting except when working around machinery.
- Carry a source of water with you. Take drinks frequently—every 15 minutes.
- Take frequent breaks in the shade or in a cool environment during the hottest times of the day.
- Adjust gradually to working in the heat over a period of 10-20 days.

Someone suffering from heat exhaustion or heat stroke should be moved to a cool environment, offered sips of water, if

conscious, and provided with attention from emergency medical personnel.

Wear sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 15. Make sure children are also adequately protected.



Recognizing Heat Illnesses

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused by an increase in core body temperature often coupled with fluid loss (dehydration).

It's important to recognize heat exhaustion early and seek treatment as quickly as possible. It does not need to be hot outside for heat exhaustion to occur. Many victims develop heat exhaustion just from exertion.

Heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke if not treated in time.

Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion:

- weakness
- dizziness
- warm, moist, pale skin
- nausea and vomiting

Difficulty: N/A

Time Required: One minute to recognize, several minutes to treat.

Here's How:

1. **Stay safe!** If the environment is hot enough for the victim to get overheated, then it's hot enough for the rescuers. Follow universal precautions and wear personal protective equipment if you have it.
2. Make sure the patient has an airway and is breathing. Follow the ABC's of first aid.
3. Move the victim to a cooler environment immediately. Shade is better than sun, air conditioning is better than outside, etc. The cooler the better.
4. Remove the victim's clothing to encourage heat loss.
5. If the victim is conscious and able to follow commands, he or she can drink fluids to rehydrate.
6. If the victim is unable to follow commands or is vomiting, call 911 immediately!

Tips:

1. For victims of heat illness that have stopped sweating and/or are unconscious, treat for heat stroke.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs when heat exhaustion is left untreated and the victim's core body temperature continues to rise. Heat stroke is a severe emergency that can lead to coma, irreversible brain damage and death. Learn to recognize heat stroke and treat the victim aggressively to prevent further injury.

Signs and symptoms of heat stroke:

- coma or confusion
- hot, flushed, dry skin
- deep, rapid breathing
- possibly seizures

Difficulty: Easy

Time Required: Less than a minute

Here's How:

1. **Stay safe!** If the environment is hot enough for the victim to get overheated, then it's hot enough for the rescuers. Follow universal precautions and wear personal protective equipment if you have it. There are also several other causes of coma that may affect the victim.
2. Call 911 immediately!
3. Assure that the victim has an airway and is breathing. Follow the ABC's of first aid.
4. Move the victim to a cooler environment immediately. Shade is better than sun, air conditioning is better than outside, etc. The cooler the better.
5. Remove the victim's clothing to encourage heat loss.
6. Put ice on the armpits, groin, and neck area. Cool the victim as aggressively as possible.

Tips:

1. Strip the victim completely to facilitate cooling.
2. Cover the victim with a sheet soaked with water to cool the victim's body.
3. Use ice at the victim's armpits, neck, and groin.
4. DO NOT give the victim of heat stroke anything to drink.
5. A victim conscious enough to follow commands may be suffering from heat exhaustion.