

Tips for Dealing with Hot Days and Avoiding Heat Exhaustion

Although we love the nice weather it is important to recognize the risks involved in extreme heat. Your body builds up heat when you work and sweats to get rid of extra heat. But sometimes your body may not cool off fast enough. Too much heat can make you tired, hurt your job performance, and increase your chance of injury. You can get a skin rash. You can also get:

- **Dehydration.** When your body loses water, you can't cool off fast enough. You feel thirsty and weak.
- **Cramps.** You can get muscle cramps from the heat even after you leave work.
- **Heat exhaustion.** You feel tired, nauseous, headachy, and giddy (dizzy and silly). Your skin is damp and looks flushed. You may faint.
- **Heat stroke.** You may have hot dry skin and a high temperature. Or you may feel confused. You may have convulsions or become unconscious. **Heat stroke can kill you** unless you get emergency medical help.

The Risk of Heat Stress

Your risk of heat stress depends on many things. These include:

- Your physical condition (those with illness and/or chronic conditions may feel the effects of the heat more severely)
- Your age
- The weather (temperature, humidity)
- How much clothing you have on
- How fast you must move or how much weight you must lift
- If you are near a fan or there is a breeze
- If you are in the sun.

Protect Yourself and Your Family

During times of extreme heat, try to do these things:

- **Increase water intake.**
- **Stay indoors if possible.** If you do not have air conditioning, use fans.
- **Keep taking rest breaks.** If outdoors, rest in a cool, shady spot whenever possible.
- **Wear light-colored clothing** made of cotton. **If you work in protective clothing,** you need more rest breaks. You may also need to check your temperature and heart rate.
- **Do the heaviest work in the coolest time of the day, whenever possible.**
- **For heavy work in hot areas,** take turns with other workers, so some can rest.
- **If you think someone has heat stroke, call emergency services (or 911).** Immediately move the victim to the shade. Loosen his/her clothes. Wipe or spray his/her skin with cool water and fan him/her. You can use a piece of cardboard or other material as a fan.