

# PREVENTING HEAT RELATED ILLNESS

Heat related illness occurs when the body is unable to adequately cool itself. The body normally cools itself by sweating, however sometimes sweating isn't enough and the body's temperature keeps rising.

Heat related illness can range from mild conditions such as a rash or cramps to very serious conditions such as heatstroke, which can kill. Heat may also worsen the condition of someone who already has a medical condition such as heart disease.

Disorder	Symptoms	What to do
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muscle pains.</li><li>• Spasms in the abdomen, arms or legs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stop activity and sit quietly in a cool place.</li><li>• Increase fluid intake.</li><li>• Rest a few hours before returning to activity.</li><li>• Seek medical help if cramps persist.</li></ul>
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pale complexion and sweating.</li><li>• Rapid heart rate.</li><li>• Muscle cramps, weakness.</li><li>• Dizziness, headache.</li><li>• Nausea, vomiting.</li><li>• Fainting.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get the person to a cool area and lie them down.</li><li>• Remove outer clothing.</li><li>• Wet skin with cool water or wet cloths.</li><li>• Seek medical advice.</li></ul>
Heat stroke (a life threatening emergency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Same symptoms as heat exhaustion.</li><li>• Dry skin with no sweating.</li><li>• Mental condition worsens, confusion.</li><li>• Seizure.</li><li>• Appears to have a stroke or collapse.</li><li>• Unconsciousness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call an ambulance.</li><li>• Get the person to a cool area and lie them down.</li><li>• Remove clothing.</li><li>• Wet skin with water, fanning continuously.</li><li>• Position an unconscious person on their side and clear the airway.</li></ul>

## Preventing a heat related illness:

- Drink plenty of water. If you have a medical condition or are on fluid tablets, discuss your fluid intake with your doctor.
- Avoid alcoholic drinks.
- Stay indoors, if possible with air conditioning or in the shade.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Wear loose-fitting, light clothing.
- Reduce physical activity.
- Check on older, sick and frail people who may need assistance in the heat.
- Don't rely on fans unless there is adequate ventilation.

## Get help:

- For 24 hour health advice, contact Nurse-on-call on 1300 60 60 24.
- For life threatening emergencies, telephone 000.

