

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES



HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES LIVE ON A SPECTRUM.
HEAT CRAMPS → HEAT EXHAUSTION → HEAT STROKE

THIS MEANS:

- **They increase in severity as you move along the spectrum.**
 - Heat cramps are uncomfortable, sometimes disabling, but they won't kill you.
 - Heat exhaustion is uncomfortable and can cause long lasting issues, but it won't kill you (if treated so it doesn't progress to heat stroke).
 - Heat stroke can kill you.
- **They may occur in order, but they don't have to.**
 - Meaning, you might have heat cramps and then they progress to heat exhaustion and then that progresses to heat stroke, BUT it doesn't have to happen that way. Heat stroke can occur suddenly without obvious symptoms of heat cramps or heat exhaustion occurring first.
- **Some symptoms overlap.**
 - Meaning, with some symptoms, there isn't a clear-cut line between heat exhaustion and heat stroke, they can occur with both.
 - Fatigue, headaches, dizziness, and agitation can occur with heat exhaustion and with heat stroke.

Luckily, there are some very defining symptoms to let us know the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It's important to know the difference so you take the appropriate course of action.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

SOME DEFINING SYMPTOMS OF HEAT EXHAUSTION:

- Profuse sweating
- Cool, clammy skin

With heat exhaustion, the body's "internal air-conditioning" is still working hard to try to cool the body hence, the profuse sweating and the cool, clammy skin.

Heat exhaustion requires **immediate attention** and if symptoms get worse or do not improve in **one hour**, seek immediate medical care.

HOT

HEAT STROKE

SOME DEFINING SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE:

- Increased body temperature (104 degrees or higher)
- A marked decrease in sweating
- Hot, flushed, dry skin

With heat stroke, the body's "internal air-conditioning" is NOT working anymore, hence the signs that the body cannot cool itself anymore; increased body temperature, a marked decrease in sweating, hot and dry skin.

WITH HEAT STROKE, BRAIN FUNCTION CAN BE ALTERED. THIS MEANS THAT SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE CAN ALSO INCLUDE:

- Confusion
- Slurred speech
- Agitation
- Convulsions

Heat stroke—**GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE IMMEDIATELY!**
Heat stroke can damage organs and organ systems. **HEAT STROKE CAN ALSO KILL YOU.**



Experiencing heat exhaustion or heat stroke can make you more susceptible to future bouts of heat exhaustion or heat stroke, so be aware.

Be self-aware and proactive. Meaning, pay attention to what is going on with you and how you are feeling. **EX:** If you don't normally get headaches or get dizzy but then one day when you're working out in the heat and humidity, you start to get a headache or get dizzy, take the necessary steps to cool down and see if the headache or dizziness dissipates.

SOME TREATMENTS FOR HEAT EXHAUSTION. IMMEDIATELY TAKE STEPS TO COOL DOWN.

- Move to a shady location, air conditioning, or in front of a fan
- Remove clothing, hat, shoes and socks, as the environment and circumstances allow for
- Run cool water over the skin or apply wet towels, paper towels, or a t-shirt (whatever is available) to the body, especially to the neck, armpits, and groin
- Sip on water, sports drinks, and/or juice

- If symptoms either 1) do not improve or 2) escalate within one hour of taking the necessary steps to cool down, seek medical care immediately.

The most important treatment for heat stroke: **Call 911 or seek emergency medical care immediately!**

SOME PREVENTION OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES:

- See attachments of educational/instructional components of the Hydration Campaign

SOME RISK FACTORS FOR HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES:

- Having a sunburn
- Being overweight or obese, not being physically fit
- Not drinking enough water and/or consuming too many dehydrating drinks
- Using some prescription medications, particularly diuretics
- Being younger than 13 and older than 65
- Not being acclimated to your environment
- Having a significant disability

Heat-related illnesses can be a complex topic. This isn't all there is to possibly know about them, but it covers very important points that are easy to remember and easy to execute.