

BACKGROUND:

Heat stress from exertion and working in hot environments places people at risk for illnesses or even death. The most serious heat-related illness is heat stroke, but heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat rash are also potentially serious risks. Heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable by understanding the risk factors, symptoms, and how to protect yourself.

RISK FACTORS:

Environmental

- High temperature
- High humidity
- Direct sun exposure/no shade
- Other sources of heat (e.g. equipment)
- Limited air movement/no ventilation

Physical

- Physical exertion
- Lack of acclimatization
- Low fluid consumption
- Heavy clothing/equipment/PPE
- Poor physical condition/health problems
- Some medications
- Advanced age
- Caffeine/alcohol use

SYMPTOMS:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dizziness
- Irritability
- Thirst
- Heavy sweating
- Muscle cramps or spasms
- Elevated body temperature
- Decreased urine output
- Hot, dry skin (heat stroke)
- Seizures (heat stroke)

Call 911 immediately if heat stroke is suspected! Move the patient to a shaded, cool area and remove outer clothing. Place wet cloths or ice over the body or soak clothing with cold water.

PREVENTION:

- **WATER:** Drink frequent, small amounts of cool water. A good guide is 1 cup of water every 15 to 20 minutes during moderate activity in moderately hot conditions.
- **REST:** Schedule and encourage frequent rest breaks.
- **SHADE:** Take breaks in shaded or air-conditioned recovery areas.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of the day.
- Set up a buddy system and monitor your co-workers for signs and symptoms of heat illness.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton. Avoid non-breathable synthetic clothing.
- Acclimatize yourself if new to the environment. Gradually increase the time spent in hot conditions over a 7 to 14-day period.

The free OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool app for iPhone or Android is a useful tool for evaluating heat illness risk. It also lists symptoms and first aid recommendations for various heat-related illnesses.

Important Phone Numbers

Logistics: (212) 456-1635
Health & Safety: (212) 456-3303
Disney Medical: (212) 456-3412