

Spotlight on Safety

Heat Illness Prevention & Hydration Keeping Your Cool When It's Hot

When temperatures and humidity rise, we are at risk for heat illnesses. Our bodies are built to naturally combat heat in order to keep our internal body temperatures at a safe level. At a certain point, our bodies are no longer able to self-sustain and we begin to experience heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and possibly even heat stroke. Factors such as age, weight, high blood pressure, and certain medications may make certain people more susceptible than others. Below is a breakdown of the warning signs and symptoms of each heat illness.

- Heat cramps: Considered to be the least serious of heat illnesses, heat cramps can be attributed to the loss of body salts and fluid from sweating. Those who suffer from heat cramps should expect to feel irritable. Cramps usually are the worst in the limbs and abdomen. Sometimes a heat rash may appear on the skin.
- Heat exhaustion : More serious than cramps but not as severe as heat stroke, heat exhaustion usually develops after exposure to high temperatures when combined with high levels of humidity and strenuous activity such as performing work outside. Symptoms include sweating profusely, rapid pulse, headache, and vomiting as your body begins to overheat.

- Heat stroke: Heat stroke occurs after prolonged physical exertion in a hot environment. Symptoms include a core body temperature of at least 104°F, confusion, skin, swollen tongue, and a state of unconsciousness. It is critical that those experiencing heat stroke get emergency care immediately – untreated heat stroke can damage your brain, heart, kidneys, muscles, and even result in death.

Now that you know more about heat-related illnesses, we will review some ways to beat the heat and stay safe while at work.

Tips for staying cool

- Preparation is key. Monitor the latest local weather forecasts to be ready for temperature changes. Identify hydration stations as well as cool-down areas for employees to go if you work outside or will be exposed to high temperatures. Schedule strenuous activities during the times of day that the heat index is its lowest, such as mornings and evenings.

Keep safety in mind : Sometimes our wellbeing takes a back seat when working to complete a job. Understand your limits and avoid overexertion by Risk Management's w

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Safety at Home – Heat Stroke increases risk for heat illness : Heat stroke is one of the 3 leading causes of sudden death in sports or exercise activities. You should always start hydrating at least one hour before p 0 Td (f)Tj 0.34 0.011 Tc -0.011 Tw 0.403 0 Td