

Preventing Heat Related Illnesses



Heat-related deaths and illness are preventable, yet annually many people succumb to extreme heat. An important goal of this web site is to provide easily accessible resources for members of the public, local health departments and other organizations, assisting ongoing outreach efforts to those most vulnerable to extreme heat events.

[Check Oregon weather alerts \(NOAA\)](#)

Have questions? See [Frequently asked questions about extreme heat and public health](#) (pdf)

Heat-related illness: know the warning signs and symptoms

Muscle cramping might be the first sign of heat-related illness, and may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

Here is how you can recognize heat exhaustion and heat stroke and what to do:

Heat Exhaustion	What you should do
Heavy sweating	Move to a cooler location.
Weakness	Lie down and loosen your clothing.
Cold, pale, clammy skin	Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of your body as possible.
Fast, weak pulse	Sip water.
Nausea or vomiting, fainting	If you have vomited and it continues, seek medical attention immediately.

Heat Stroke	What you should do
High body temperature (above 103°F)	Call 911 immediately - this is a medical emergency.
Hot, red, dry or moist skin	Move the person to a cooler environment.
Rapid and strong pulse	Reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths or even a bath.
Possible unconsciousness	Do NOT give fluids.

Heat and infants and children

Infants and young children are sensitive to the effects of extreme heat, and must rely on other people to keep them cool and hydrated.

- Never leave infants or children in a parked car. Nor should pets be left in parked cars—they can suffer heat-related illness too.
- Dress infants and children in loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Seek medical care immediately if your child has symptoms of [symptoms of heat-related illness](#).

Heat and people with chronic medical conditions

People with a chronic medical condition are less likely to sense and respond to changes in temperature. Also, they may be taking medications that can worsen the impact of extreme heat. People in this category need the following information.

- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- Check on a friend or neighbor, and have someone do the same for you.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates regularly.
- Don't use the stove or oven to cook - it will make you and your house hotter.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Seek medical care immediately if you or someone you know experiences symptoms of heat-related illness.

Heat and athletes

People who exercise in extreme heat are more likely to become dehydrated and get heat-related illness. STOP all activity and get to a cool environment if you feel faint or weak.

- Limit outdoor activity, especially midday when the sun is hottest.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Schedule workouts and practices earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler.
- Pace activity. Start activities slow and pick up the pace gradually.
- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink more. Muscle cramping may be an early sign of heat-related illness.
- Monitor a teammate's condition, and have someone do the same for you.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Seek medical care immediately if you or a teammate has symptoms of heat-related illness.

Heat and outdoor workers

People who work outdoors are more likely to become dehydrated and are more likely to get heat-related illness. STOP all activity and get to a cool environment if you feel faint or weak.

- Drink from two to four cups of water every hour while working. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink.
- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing large amounts of sugar.
- Wear and reapply sunscreen as indicated on the package.
- Ask if tasks can be scheduled for earlier or later in the day to avoid midday heat.
- Wear a brimmed hat and loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Spend time in air-conditioned buildings during breaks and after work.
- Encourage co-workers to take breaks to cool off and drink water.
- Seek medical care immediately if you or a co-worker has symptoms of heat-related illness.
- For more information, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress>.

Heat and low income

- If you have air conditioning, use it to keep your home cool.
- If you can't afford to use your air conditioning:
 - Contact your local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area.
 - You can also contact [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) for help.
- Drink more water than usual and don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
- Check on a friend or neighbor, and have someone do the same for you.
- Seek medical care immediately if you have, or someone you know has, [symptoms of heat-related illness](#).