

Things you need to know:

- Heat illness can strike quickly—learn to recognize the symptoms.
- Workers with heat illness should stop working, get cool, and drink fluids.
- Altered mental state can be a sign of heat stroke and requires immediate attention.
- When treating severe heat illness, cooling is the first priority.

HEAT STRESS

First Aid for Heat Illness

Cooling is key. Know the symptoms and treatment of heat illness.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can occur in any order. For example, a person will not always experience heat cramps before they suffer from heat exhaustion.

What to Do

Less Severe

Heat Rash/Prickly Heat

- Red cluster of pimples or small blisters, usually on neck, upper chest, groin, under breasts, and in elbow creases
- Extensive areas of skin that do not sweat on heat exposure, but present gooseflesh appearance that subsides with cool environments

- When possible, a cooler, less humid work environment is the best treatment
- Keep rash area dry
- Powder can be applied to increase comfort
- Do not use ointments or creams, as they may impair cooling—warm, moist skin can make the rash worse

Severe

Heat Cramps

- Muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs

- Drink fluids every 15 to 20 minutes and eat a snack or sports drink
- Avoid salt tablets
- Get medical help if the worker has heart problems, is on a low sodium diet, or if cramps do not subside within 1 hour

Heat Syncope (Fainting)

- Fainting, dizziness, or light-headedness after standing or suddenly rising from a sitting/lying position

- Sit or lie down in a cool place when beginning to feel faint or dizzy
- Slowly drink water or clear juice

Heat Exhaustion

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness, weakness
- Irritability
- Thirst, heavy sweating
- Elevated body temperature
- Decreased urine output

- Call for medical help or take worker to a health facility for evaluation and treatment
- Stay with worker until help arrives
- Remove worker from hot area and give liquids to drink
- Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks
- Cool worker with water, cold compresses, an ice bath, or fans
- Encourage frequent sips of cool water

Heat Stroke

- Confusion, altered mental state, slurred speech, loss of consciousness
- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Seizures
- Very high body temperatures
- Fatal if treatment delayed

- This is an emergency! Call for emergency care immediately!
- Move worker to a cool area and remove outer clothing
- Cool worker with water, cold compresses, an ice bath, or fans
- Circulate air around worker to speed cooling
- Place cold, wet cloths or ice on head, neck, armpits, and groin
- Stay with worker until emergency medical services arrive

OFTEN FATAL

Heat Stress First Aid for Heat Illness

Heat Exhaustion

Symptoms include:

- Clammy skin
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Extreme thirst
- Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)
- Dehydration
- Fainting
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Weakness
- Decreased urine output

What are the signs of heat exhaustion?

- Dizzy or confused and complaining of headaches or cramps
- Sweating with cooler skin to the touch
- Paler than usual – depending on your skin tone, this could mean your skin looks ashen, grey or a more yellowish hue. It might be easier to notice this change in colour on the palms of hands, nails, eyes, gums or tongue
- Feel nauseous, with fast breathing and heart rate

What is heatstroke?

Heatstroke occurs when someone becomes so hot it causes a failure of the brain's thermostat, leading to the body becoming dangerously overheated. It is an emergency and needs medical help urgently.

What are the signs of heatstroke?

Someone with heatstroke may:

- Have hot, flushed and dry skin
- Have a headache, feel dizzy or be confused and/or restless
- Rapidly worsening condition leading to being unresponsive
- Body temperature over 40°C

What to do if someone has heatstroke?

Call 999 immediately or ask someone else to do it.

Quickly move them into a cool environment and remove outer clothing. Loosely wrap the person in cold damp clothes or a sheet. Continuously pour cold water over the sheet or clothes. If there isn't a sheet available, you can also fan them or sponge them with cold water. Keep cooling them while waiting for help to arrive.

If their temperature returns to normal and they no longer feel hot to touch, you can stop cooling them. Replace the wet sheet with a dry one and help them to rest.