



Advice on Preventing Heat Exhaustion

In order to prevent heat stress, heat exhaustion or heat stroke during a period of hot and humid weather, follow the following advice:

- Drink plenty of water
- Eat light and choose foods high in water content, such as fruits, salads, and soups.
- Avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages which increase water loss and can dehydrate the body.
- Cool the skin with cool cloths and take cool baths or showers.
- If your living quarters appear too difficult to ventilate, try to seek comfort in an air conditioned shopping mall, senior recreation area, library or movie theater.
- Cut back on physical activity and rest at the first sign of fatigue, lightheadedness, or feeling hot.
- Wear loose, light-colored and lightweight clothing. If outdoors, wear a hat and try to stay out of the direct sun as much as possible.

Recognize the symptoms of heat stress, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke:

Heat Stress: Early warning signs are general discomfort, lack of energy, and loss of appetite.

Heat Exhaustion: Severe cramping of muscles due to excess sweating and loss of salt from the body due to exertion and/or high temperatures. Rest in a cool place and replenish lost fluids and salts unless on a sodium-restricted diet. If left untreated, heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke.

Heat Stroke: An extreme and serious condition where the body temperature rises sharply. Symptoms can include delirium, disorientation and coma. Heat stroke is life-threatening and is most likely to develop during a heat wave where the humidity is high and the temperatures are at or above 90° F for three or more consecutive days. A person suffering from heat stroke needs to have their body temperature lowered by cooling the body surface with water and be transported to the hospital for immediate treatment.

If you have any severe reactions to the heat that can not be alleviated by rest and fluids, seek medical attention immediately!

NOTE: VICTIMS OF HEAT STRESS ARE OFTEN THE VERY YOUNG, CHRONICALLY ILL AND ELDER CITIZENS.

FOR THE ELDERLY LIVING ALONE, MAKE SURE TO CONTACT NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE. DO NOT IGNORE THE EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS AND MAKE SURE TO FOLLOW THE ADVICE DESCRIBED ABOVE!