

## Fact Sheet

# Heat-related illness signs, symptoms, and treatment

Overview of the signs, symptoms and treatment for individuals affected by heat-related illness.

Illness	Symptoms	Treatment
Dehydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Profuse sweating</li><li>&gt; Increase in body temperature</li><li>&gt; Lethargy and tiredness</li><li>&gt; Loss of appetite</li><li>&gt; Being thirsty</li><li>&gt; Irritability</li><li>&gt; Medium to dark urine</li></ul>	<p>If you see someone experiencing these symptoms, help them to cease activity and go to a cool shaded place.</p> <p>Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids (avoid caffeine and alcohol).</p> <p>Try to keep them cool by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; turning on a fan or air-conditioner</li><li>&gt; using a spray bottle of water on the face and body.</li></ul> <p>Medical attention should be sought if symptoms do not improve.</p>
Heat rash (caused by inflammation of the sweat glands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Erythematous (abnormal) papular rash, pruritis, secondary infection</li></ul>	<p>Rash may subside with no specific treatment.</p> <p>If you see someone experiencing these symptoms, help them to minimise sweating by staying in a cool place, advising them to take frequent showers, and wear light clothes.</p> <p>Keep the affected area dry.</p> <p>Topical antihistamine and antiseptic creams can be used to reduce discomfort and prevent secondary infection.</p>
Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Muscle spasms</li><li>&gt; Painful muscle cramps in the limbs or abdomen twitching</li><li>&gt; Moist cool skin</li></ul>	<p>If you see someone experiencing these symptoms, help them to cease activity and go to a cool shaded place.</p> <p>Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids (avoid caffeine and alcohol).</p> <p>Try to keep them cool by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; turning on a fan or air-conditioner</li><li>&gt; using a spray bottle of water on the face and body to cool down, or use a wet towel</li><li>&gt; advising them to have a cool shower or bath</li><li>&gt; helping them to lie in a cool place with legs supported and slightly elevated</li></ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; massage limbs gently to ease the spasms, or firmly if cramped, then apply ice packs.</li> </ul> <p>Medical attention should be sought if heat cramps are sustained for more than one hour.</p>
<p>Heat syncope (May be aggravated by cardiovascular disease, and certain medications)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Dizziness</li> <li>&gt; Fainting</li> <li>&gt; Confusion</li> </ul>	<p>If you see someone experiencing these symptoms help them to cease activity and go to a cool shaded place.</p> <p>Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids (avoid caffeine and alcohol).</p> <p>Try to keep them cool by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; turning on a fan or air-conditioner</li> <li>&gt; using a spray bottle of water on the face and body to cool down, or use a wet towel</li> <li>&gt; advising them to have a cool shower or bath</li> <li>&gt; helping them to lie in a cool place with legs supported and slightly elevated.</li> </ul> <p>If heat cramps occur, massage limbs gently to ease the spasms, or firmly if cramped, then apply ice packs.</p> <p>Medical attention should be sought if symptoms do not improve.</p>
<p>Heat exhaustion (May be aggravated by cardiovascular disease, and certain medications)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Headaches</li> <li>&gt; High temperature</li> <li>&gt; Profuse sweating</li> <li>&gt; Cold, clammy pale skin</li> <li>&gt; Fatigue, weakness, and restlessness</li> <li>&gt; Nausea and vomiting</li> <li>&gt; Weak but rapid pulse</li> <li>&gt; Poor coordination</li> <li>&gt; Circulatory collapse</li> </ul>	<p>This is a potential medical emergency. If you see someone experiencing symptoms, seek medical assistance or call 000.</p> <p>While waiting for advice or ambulance, move the person to a cool shaded place or airconditioned area.</p> <p>Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids (avoid caffeine and alcohol).</p> <p>Try to keep them cool by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; turning on a fan or air-conditioner</li> <li>&gt; using a spray bottle of water on the face and body to cool down, or use a wet towel</li> <li>&gt; advising them to take a cool shower or bath</li> <li>&gt; put cool packs under the armpits, in the groin or on the back of the neck (or all three places) to reduce body heat</li> <li>&gt; helping them to lie in a cool place with legs supported and slightly elevated</li> <li>&gt; if heat cramps present, massage limbs gently to ease the spasms, or firmly if cramped, then apply ice packs.</li> </ul> <p>If still unwell, seek medical advice as soon as possible.</p>

		If symptoms continue, or vomiting, impaired mental status or hypotension occurs, seek urgent medical assistance immediately by calling 000 for an ambulance.
Heatstroke (May be aggravated by cardiovascular disease, and certain medications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Confusion, headaches, dizziness, and nausea</li> <li>&gt; skin flushed, hot and unusually dry</li> <li>&gt; intense thirst</li> <li>&gt; dry, swollen tongue</li> <li>&gt; sudden rise in body temperature (40°C+)</li> <li>&gt; disorientation, delirium</li> <li>&gt; slurred speech</li> <li>&gt; aggressive or bizarre behaviour</li> <li>&gt; sleepiness</li> <li>&gt; convulsions</li> <li>&gt; unconsciousness may develop rapidly</li> <li>&gt; seizures or coma.</li> </ul>	<p>This is an extreme medical emergency. If you see someone experiencing symptoms, call 000 immediately for an ambulance.</p> <p>While waiting for the ambulance to arrive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; if possible, move the person to somewhere cool and keep them still</li> <li>&gt; loosen their clothes, sprinkle them with cool water, or wrap them in a damp sheet</li> <li>&gt; place cool, damp cloths in their armpits, on the back of their neck and on their forehead to cool them down as quickly as possible</li> <li>&gt; use a fan to help cool them down if one is available</li> <li>&gt; do not give aspirin or paracetamol to a person affected by heat.</li> </ul> <p>If the person is conscious:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; try to keep them calm</li> <li>&gt; give them small sips of water or fruit juice</li> <li>&gt; stay with them until the ambulance arrives.</li> </ul> <p>If the person is unconscious:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; check that their airway is clear</li> <li>&gt; monitor their pulse rate</li> <li>&gt; stay with them until the ambulance arrives.</li> </ul>

## For more information

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