

# Heat-Related Illnesses

When the weather starts heating up, remember to be safe in the sun. Many people only think to protect themselves against sunburn, but when you become too hot, you can get extremely sick. The following are some common heat-related illnesses to be aware of:

- **Heat exhaustion** usually happens when a person sweats a lot and does not drink enough liquids to replace the lost fluids. This typically happens to people who work or exercise outside when it's very hot. Symptoms include sweating, feeling faint or lightheaded, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, headache, rapid breathing, and a rapid heart rate. Your skin becomes cool and clammy and may turn pale or flushed.
- **Heatstroke** can sometimes follow heat exhaustion and is an emergency situation. Your body fails to regulate its own temperature and can continue to rise, often to 105° or higher. You may stop sweating completely. Heatstroke can make you confused or delirious, and you may even lose consciousness. Your skin gets hot, dry, red, or flushed, even under your arms.



The following tips can help you prevent heat-related illnesses:

- Exercise outside either early in the morning or in the evening, when temperatures are cooler.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes that reflect the sun and let sweat evaporate to cool your skin. Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella for shade.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of water a day. It's very important to stay hydrated when it's hot. When exercising or playing sports in the heat, you may need to drink more fluids.
- Be alert if you're working or playing sports in hot weather when the humidity is 75% or higher. Your body isn't nearly as able to lose heat through sweating when the humidity is high. Try to avoid activity or sports when it's hot and humid.

If you start to develop symptoms of a heat illness, stop what you're doing and get out of the sun. Take off extra clothing and lie down to rest, use a cool compress or a fan to help cool down and drink plenty of cool water, a little at a time. If you think you're developing heatstroke, get help immediately. Call 911 or have someone drive you to the emergency room.

For more information, visit the Self-Care section of our Healthy Living page at [www.healthnetfederalservices.com](http://www.healthnetfederalservices.com), or e-mail us at [healthyliving@healthnet.com](mailto:healthyliving@healthnet.com)

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