

HOT WEATHER & YOUR HEALTH

Heat-related illnesses happen when the body is not able to properly cool itself. While the body normally cools itself by sweating, during extreme heat, this might not be enough. In these cases, a person's body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself down. This can cause damage to the brain and other vital organs. Types of heat related illnesses include:

Heat Cramps - Muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. Although heat cramps are the least severe, they are often the first signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.

What to look for: heavy sweating, muscle pains or spasms

Actions to take: stop physical activity and move to a cooler place, drink water or a sports drink. Seek medical attention if cramps last longer than one hour,

Heat Exhaustion - Typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim's condition will worsen. Body temperature will keep rising and the victim may suffer heat stroke.

Heat Stroke - A life-threatening condition. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly. A person who is experiencing heat stroke needs medical attention.

To learn more about who is more at risk of heat related illnesses, visit the "at risk populations" page of the NIHHS website: www.heat.gov.

For tips on coping with hot weather and health or other challenges during a heat wave click on the link below:

<https://www.heat.gov/pages/planning-and-preparing>