

Fact Sheet - Heat Illnesses

Our bodies cool off in hot areas by sweating, increasing blood circulation, and increasing the blood flow to the skin. When a body cannot get rid of heat, heat stress occurs. If unchecked, this can cause vital organs to malfunction, sickness and even death. Four common heat illnesses are:

1. **Heat Rash:** is a common condition in which areas of the skin itch intensely and often feel prickly, or sting, due to overheating. Heat rash looks like tiny bumps surrounded by a zone of red skin.

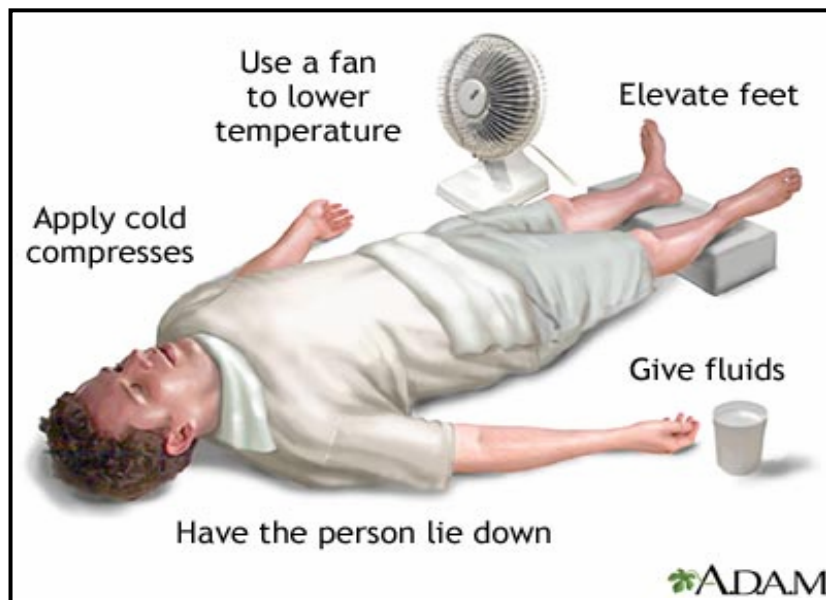
Symptoms: sweat ducts become plugged, rash develops, skin remains wet because sweat does not evaporate readily.

Treatment: rest in a cool area, drink liquids, and dry skin regularly.

2. **Heat Cramps:** are muscular spasms that occur when the body loses too much salt during profuse sweating.

Symptoms: rapid heart-beat, hot, sweaty skin, dizziness, cramping of abdominal muscles, nausea.

Treatment:



3. **Heat Exhaustion:** is an early indicator that the body's cooling system is becoming overwhelmed.

Symptoms: include headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness, or fainting; weakness and clammy or moist skin; mood changes such as irritability or confusion; upset stomach or vomiting. It can lead to heat stroke if ignored.

Treatment: includes moving the person to a cooler place, and if the person is conscious, providing small amounts of cool water to drink. Fan the victim to circulate the air while applying water with a cool cloth.

4. **Heat Stroke (may cause death):** is the most severe form of all heat illness caused by the failure of the body's cooling system. It can occur even in people who are not exercising if the weather is hot enough.

Symptoms: include dry, hot skin with no sweating; mental confusion or losing consciousness; seizures or fits.

Treatment: includes all of the elements for heat exhaustion and contacting 911 immediately for medical assistance.

NOTE: Pesticide poisoning has similar symptoms as heat exhaustion

