

Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

Heat-Related Illness

Heat Cramps • Heat Exhaustion • Heat Stroke

Health Information Fact Sheet #8

This Health Information Fact Sheet is designed to assist members, parents and caregivers recognize the symptoms of heat-related illness and learn how to treat and prevent its occurrence.

Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.



Some Facts about Heat Cramps:

- Heat Cramps are muscle pains or spasms, usually in the legs, abdomen, or arms and might occur in association with more strenuous activity.
- Sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture and the low salt level in the muscles can cause painful cramps.

Treatment For Cramping:

- Rest in a cool, shady, air-conditioned place.
- Drink water, clear juice, or a sports beverage.
- Do not return to any strenuous activity for a few hours after cramps go away.
- Seek Medical Attention if cramps do not go away in one (1) hour.

Some Facts About Heat Exhaustion:

- Heat Exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

What to Watch For:

The primary signs of Heat Exhaustion:

- Heavy Sweating
- Headache
- Paleness
- Fainting
- Tiredness
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Muscle Cramps
- Cool, Moist Skin
- Weakness
- Fast, Weak Pulse
- Dizziness
- Breathing Fast & Shallow

Treatment For Heat Exhaustion:

- Remove restrictive clothing and any unnecessary equipment.
- Rest in a cool, shady, air-conditioned place.
- Drink water, clear juice, or a sports beverage.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.

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Some Facts about Heat Stroke:

Heat Stroke is the most serious heat related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature:

- the body's temperature rises rapidly,
- the sweating mechanism fails, and
- the body is unable to cool down.

Warning! *Body temperature may rise to 105°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.*

Seek Medical Attention Immediately!

What to Watch For:

The primary signs of Heat Stroke:

- An extremely high body temperature of 104°F or higher
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Red, hot, and dry or moist skin
- Confusion
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Unconsciousness
- Throbbing headache

Treatment For Heat Stroke:

Response time will be critical!

Call 9-1-1 immediately and begin the cooling process:

- Loosen or remove restrictive clothing and any adaptive equipment (if appropriate).
- Help the body to immediately cool down by any of the following means:
 - if outdoors, move into an air conditioned area and/or near a fan; get into a tub of cool water or a cool shower; gently sponge with cool or cold water;
 - carefully place light weight ice bags at the neck, armpit and groin areas.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102°F. Be careful not to over cool the body. If the member is alert, give him or her sips of cool (no ice) water.
- Do not give alcohol.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.



The Heat-Related Illness Health Information Fact Sheet is #8 in a series of Health Information Fact Sheets compiled by DDD Health Care Services.

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