

PREVENTING HEAT DISORDERS

Heat Stress Symptoms

Pay close attention to the following heat-related illnesses in yourself, your students, and your co-workers. These are listed in order of severity:

1. decreased energy
2. light-headedness
3. flushed or pale skin
4. nausea
5. headache
6. rapid and shallow breathing
7. heavy sweating
8. confusion
9. muscle cramps
10. vomiting
11. dry skin, no sweating
12. fainting

Heat Disorders: What to Do

- Encourage anyone experiencing early signs of heat illness to drink more fluids and to get out of the sun. Sports drinks can replenish lost minerals. Avoid salt tablets.
- Remove excess clothing.
- If symptoms worsen, move the victim to a cool place.
- Pour cool water over the person or use cold packs.
- Keep the person lying down with feet raised.
- If the victim is vomiting, has fainted or exhibits confused, angry or strange behavior, call 911.

Prevention

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting and lightweight clothing. A wide brimmed hat will protect your face and neck.
- Use sun block of 15 SPF or more and encourage students to apply it as well when going outside.
- Drink plenty of water and do not wait until you are thirsty. Avoid caffeine.
- Avoid overexertion, strenuous work and outside play during the hottest part of the day.
- If children are using playground equipment, check any metal surfaces such as slides to be sure they are not hot to the touch.
- Give yourself a chance to get used to the heat. Take several days to get used to it by gradually spending time in similar conditions.

