

THE HAZARDS OF HEAT

As the weather warms up, so does the concern for heat stress. Too much heat stress leads to heat illness, the body's way of saying it can't take the heat.

Heat Disorders

- **Heat Rash/Prickly Heat** – may occur in hot and humid environments, where sweat doesn't evaporate easily from the skin's surface.
- **Heat Cramps** – are caused when people drink large quantities of water but fail to replace their bodies' loss of salt.
- **Fainting** (heat syncope) – may be a problem for those not used to hot environments and who simply stand still in the heat.
- **Heat Exhaustion** – results from loss of fluid through sweating. This is usually caused by failing to drink enough fluids or take in enough salt, or both. The person still sweats, but experiences extreme weakness or fatigue, giddiness, nausea or headache. The skin is clammy and moist, the complexion pale or flushed, and the body temperature normal or slightly higher than normal.
- **Heat Stroke** – most serious health problem for employees in hot environments. It is caused by the failure of the body's internal mechanism to regulate its core temperature. Sweating stops and the body can no longer rid itself of excess heat.

Prevention & Treatment

- Get out of the sun and rest in a cool place.
- Drink more fluids. Sports drinks can replenish lost minerals. Avoid salt tablets.
- Moving around, rather than standing still, will usually reduce the possibility of fainting.
- If symptoms worsen, pour cool water over the person, keep them lying down with feet raised. If victim is vomiting, has fainted or exhibits confused, angry or strange behavior, call 911.
- 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.

