

Heat Exhaustion & Heat Stroke

Sweat evaporates from the skin to cool the body. If this personal cooling system does not work right or fails to work, heat exhaustion or a heat stroke can occur.

Heat exhaustion is a warning that the body is getting too hot. With a heat stroke, body organs start to overheat. They will stop working if they get hot enough. If it is not treated, **a heat stroke can result in death.**

Signs & Symptoms

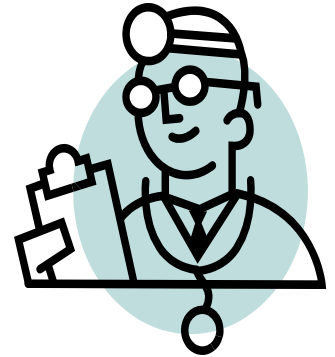
For a Heat Stroke

These signs and symptoms can occur suddenly with little warning:

- Very high temperature (104°F or higher).
- Hot, dry, red skin. No sweating.
- Deep breathing and fast pulse. Then shallow breathing and weak pulse.
- Confusion. Hallucinations.
- Convulsions.
- Loss of consciousness.

For Heat Exhaustion

- Normal, low, or only slightly elevated body temperature.
- Cool, clammy, pale skin. Sweating.
- Dry mouth. Thirst.
- Fatigue. Weakness. Feeling dizzy.
- Headache.
- Nausea. Vomiting can occur.
- Muscle cramps.
- Weak or rapid pulse.



Causes

Anything that keeps the body's natural cooling system from working right can lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. This includes extreme heat and humidity; being in places without fans or air conditioners during hot, humid weather; not being able to get to public air-conditioned places; waiting for a bus or other type of public transportation in hot, humid weather; overdressing; changes in the skin due to aging; poor circulation; heart, lung, and/or kidney disease; not being able to sweat due to medicines, such as water pills and some used for mental illnesses; Alcohol or drug use or any illness that causes weakness, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Treatment

A heat stroke is a medical emergency. Heat exhaustion may respond to self-care measures. If not, medical care is needed.