

# PREVENTING Heat-Related Illness

## TIPS for the General Population

### What are the symptoms of heat-related illness?

#### HEAT Exhaustion

- Heavy Sweating
- Weakness
- Cold, pale, clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

#### HEAT Stroke

- A very high temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (may appear wet if person was sweating from heavy work or exercise)
- Rapid or strong pulse
- Possible unconsciousness

### Do I need to be concerned about hot temperatures?

**Yes!** When it gets hot outside, our bodies can be vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke. During a period of abnormally and uncomfortable hot weather, such as days over 90 or 95 degrees, our bodies can become too hot and lose the ability to cool down.

### What's the difference between **heat exhaustion** and **heat stroke**?

**Heat exhaustion** is a milder form of heat-related illness, but it can easily turn into heat stroke. Heat exhaustion could happen when you are exposed to high temperatures for several days, without replacing your body's fluids and electrolytes.

A **heat stroke** could happen when your body becomes too hot and loses the ability to control its temperature. This can lead to more serious health issues, such as organ and brain damage. Heat stroke requires immediate medical attention.

### How do I protect myself on hot days?

- ☐ Drink more water than usual. Don't wait until you are thirsty.
- ☐ Schedule tasks for earlier or later in the day to avoid midday heat.
- ☐ Wearing and reapplying sunscreen as indicated on the package can help protect you. Avoid direct sunlight.
- ☐ Use air conditioning if you have it in your home, visit a cooling center or splash pad in your area. Visit [www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/454927](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/article/454927) for locations.
- ☐ If you have to use a fan, don't set it up to blow directly on you. Instead you should use it to create cross ventilation in your home.
- ☐ Try not to use your stove and oven.
- ☐ Eat a lot of fruit, and light meals to help you stay hydrated.
- ☐ Buddy up! Identifying heat related illness may be difficult. You may need medical attention but not know it, so reach out to your neighbor or friend for help. If symptoms are recognized, seek medical attention immediately.

## Warning Signs:

*Heat  
Exhaustion*

vs.

**HEAT  
STROKE**

Heat-related illness is

***Preventable!***

Stay somewhere cool

Drink plenty of water

Avoid sugar, alcohol & caffeine

Wear light clothing

Paleness  
Tiredness  
Weakness  
Dizziness  
Headache  
Fainting  
Muscle cramps  
Heavy sweating  
Nausea or vomiting

Extremely high body  
temperature (103°F+)  
Red, hot, dry skin  
(with no sweating)  
Rapid, strong pulse  
Throbbing headache  
Dizziness  
Nausea  
Confusion  
Unconsciousness

***Watch out!***

*If left untreated,  
heat exhaustion can  
progress to*



**STOP**

If you recognize symptoms  
of heat stroke, it is  
**LIFE THREATENING.**  
Get the person somewhere  
cool and seek medical  
attention  
**IMMEDIATELY.**

Michelle L. Holshue, 2012

Data on heat-related illness via CDC:

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/>