

Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke



Signs and Symptoms:

Heat Exhaustion:

- severe thirst
- muscle weakness
- nausea, sometimes vomiting
- fast, shallow breathing
- irritability
- headache
- increased sweating
- cool, clammy skin
- elevation of body temperature to less than 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius)

Heatstroke:

- severe, throbbing headache
- weakness, dizziness, or confusion
- difficulty breathing
- decreased responsiveness or loss of consciousness
- may not be sweating
- flushed, hot, dry skin
- elevation of body temperature to 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius) or higher

During hot, humid weather, the body's internal temperature can rise and can result in heat exhaustion and heatstroke. If not quickly treated, heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke, which requires immediate emergency medical care and can be fatal.



What to Do:

If the child has a temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius) or more, or shows any symptoms of heatstroke, seek emergency medical care immediately. In cases of heat exhaustion and while awaiting help for a child with possible heatstroke:

1. Bring the child indoors or into the shade immediately.
2. Undress the child.
3. Have the child lie down; elevate feet slightly.
4. If the child is alert, place in cool (not cold) bath water, or sponge bathe the child repeatedly. If outside, spray the child with mist from a garden hose.
5. If the child is alert, give frequent sips of cool, clear fluids (clear juices or sports drinks are best).
6. If the child is vomiting, turn his or her body to the side to prevent choking.
7. Monitor the child's temperature.

Think Prevention!

Teach children to always drink plenty of fluids before and during any activity in hot, sunny weather – even if they aren't thirsty. Make sure kids wear light-colored loose clothing and only participate in heavy activity outdoors before noon or after 6 PM. Teach children to come indoors immediately whenever they feel overheated.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor. Review this with a doctor prior to use.

Reviewed by: Larissa Hirsch, MD Date reviewed: June 2007

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