



BASIC INFORMATION

WHAT IS HEAT EXHAUSTION?

- Heat exhaustion is a heat-related illness, it is when your body gets too hot
- Heat illness occurs when a person's core body temperature rises above a safe level of the body's internal temperature range
- Heat-related illness progresses in severity
 - Heat cramps: the mildest form
 - Heat exhaustion: moderate form
 - Heat stroke: severe form

WHAT ARE COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

- Heavy sweating
- Fast, but weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Cold, and clammy skin, often pale
- Goose bumps
- Dizziness or fainting
- Feeling tired
- Weakness
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Dark urine, which is a sign of dehydration

WHAT CAUSES HEAT EXHAUSTION?

- Exposure to high temperatures
 - Worse when combined with high humidity and/or strenuous activity
- Your body's failure to regulate your core temperature due to extreme environmental conditions
- Other causes can include
 - Alcohol use
 - Dehydration
 - Being overdressed

WHAT INCREASES MY RISK?

- Extremes in age
 - Very young
 - Elderly
- Obesity
- Certain medications, including some
 - Heart medications
 - Antihistamines
 - Diuretics
 - Psychiatric medications
 - Stimulants (prescribed and illegal)
- Sudden changes in temperature such as with travel to a warmer climate
- High heat index

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS?

- Progressing to heat stroke which is a life-threatening condition

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

- Heat exhaustion symptoms should begin to improve within an hour once treating the symptoms



HOW DO I REDUCE MY RISK?

- Heat exhaustion is preventable by learning the signs and symptoms and taking proper precautions
 - Protect against sunburn
 - Wear loose-fitting and lightweight clothing
 - Stay well hydrated
 - NEVER leave anyone in a parked car
 - Limit physical activity during the hottest parts of the day
 - Give yourself time to acclimate to the temperature
 - Learn if your medications could put you at higher risk

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

WHAT GENERAL MEASURES SHOULD I TAKE?

- Your healthcare provider will perform an exam, collect information regarding your signs and symptoms, and possibly run tests if warranted
- Self-care
 - Get out of the heat
 - Go indoors to an airconditioned room
 - Go to a shady spot
 - Sit in front of a fan
 - If possible lay on your back with your legs elevated above heart level
 - Loosen clothing
- Activity
 - Begin cooling measures, including
 - Soak in a cool bath or take a cool shower
 - Wetting towels in cool water and place on yourself
 - Apply cool compresses to neck, armpits, or groin
 - If you are unable to get indoors, soaking in a cool pond or stream can help lower your temperature
- Diet
 - Drink cool fluids such as water and sports drinks
 - Avoid alcoholic beverages
 - Avoid caffeinated beverages
- Helpful Link(s)
 - To learn more: National Library of Medicine; MedlinePlus
 - Website: <https://medlineplus.gov/heatillness.html>

WHAT ARE COMMON LABS AND TESTS?

- Testing is generally not required
- Possibly having your temperature taken

WHAT ARE MY TREATMENT OPTIONS?

- Treatment is normally self-care/ at home treatment
- Treatment is to get into a cooler environment and lower your body temperature
 - Move indoors, into air conditioning if possible
 - Begin cooling measures to lower your core body temperature
 - Loosen clothing
 - Wet towels placed on skin or take a cool bath or shower
 - Drink cool liquids preferably water or sports drinks

WHAT MEDICATIONS MAY BE PRESCRIBED?

- Medications are normally not prescribed

WHAT CAUTIONS SHOULD I TAKE?

- Follow preventative measures for hot weather safety
- Know the signs and symptoms to alert you of impending heat exhaustion

WHEN SHOULD I SEEK MEDICAL HELP?

- If you suspect heat stroke
- Seek medical attention if signs and symptoms worsen or don't improve
- If you or someone experiencing heat exhaustion becomes agitated or confused
- Loss of consciousness
- Body temperature reaching 104° F (40° C)

MY HEALTHCARE PROVIDER'S COMMENTS

REFERENCES

- Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html> . Accessed May 2019.
- Heat Illness. NIH NLM MedlinePlus. Available at: <https://medlineplus.gov/heatillness.html> . Accessed May 2019.
- Heat Exhaustion and Heatstroke. American Academy of Family Physicians; familydoctor.org. Available at: <https://familydoctor.org/condition/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/?adfree=true> . Accessed May 2019.
- Image of Heat Warning courtesy of Texas Military Department. [CC BY-ND 2.0] Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/texasmilitaryforces/36325490916>

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