

Exercise safely in the heat

Summer seems like an ideal time to exercise. After all, you don't have to worry about slipping on ice or wearing extra layers to keep warm.

But summer comes with its own set of safety issues. Heat illness can affect anyone, even people who are in great shape and healthy.



WHAT IS HEAT ILLNESS?

Heat illness happens when a person's body gets too hot. This often happens when a person exercises in high temperatures.

Heat illness can be mild to severe. Sometimes it's just a sign that you need to cool off and get out of the sun. But other times, it can be dangerous or life-threatening.



TIME TO CHILL OUT

Signs of a mild heat illness include heat rash and heat cramps. A heat rash may be red and look like pimples. Heat cramps are muscle cramps or spasms.

If you notice either of these signs when exercising, seek some shade and cool off. These are not usually serious conditions.

People who have heart conditions or who follow a low-salt diet should talk to a doctor if they notice muscle cramps or spasms with exercise. If your heat rash doesn't go away within a couple of days, see your doctor.



WHEN THE HEAT IS AN EMERGENCY

Heat exhaustion may cause:

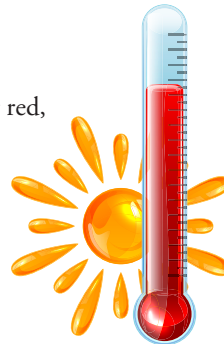
- Heavy sweating
- Cold or clammy skin
- Feeling weak
- Weak but fast pulse
- Feeling sick
- Headache
- Fainting
- Dizziness

If you notice these signs in yourself or another person, don't wait. Seek shade or go indoors. Put cool, wet cloths on the body and head or take a cool bath. Get medical help if it doesn't get better within an hour or if the person is throwing up.

HEAT STROKE is the most severe kind of heat illness.

It may cause:

- Temperature over 103°F
- Skin that is clammy, hot or red, and even dry to the touch.
- Fast and strong pulse
- Headache or confusion
- Dizziness and/or fainting
- Feeling sick



If you suspect heat stroke, get emergency medical care. Call 911 right away. Move the person to a cooler place. Apply cool cloths to their body. Do not give them anything to drink.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Family Physicians