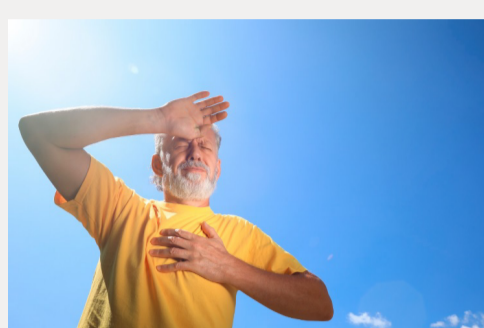


What do you need to know about Heat Stress?



With the summer months upon us, it's crucial to understand the risks associated with heat stress and how to stay safe in hot weather! Heat stress occurs when the body's cooling mechanisms are overwhelmed by heat, leading to an increase in body temperature.

Types of heat stress



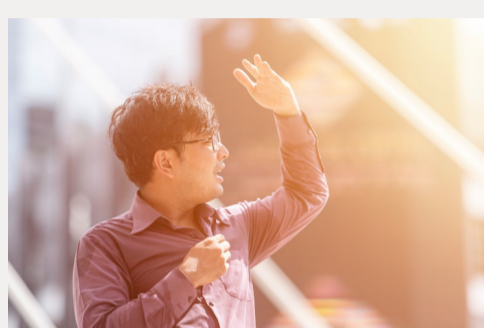
Heat Stroke

Is the most severe heat-related condition. It occurs when the body fails to regulate its temperature properly; temperature rises rapidly, sweating stops, and the body finds it difficult to cool down. During a heat stroke episode, body temperature can soar to 41°C (106°F) or higher in just 10 to 15 minutes. Without immediate emergency treatment, heat stroke can result in permanent disability or death.



Heat Cramps

The mildest form of heat-related illness manifests as heat cramps. This condition typically involves muscle aches and spasms, often occurring after exertion in high temperatures. Dehydration is a common factor contributing to these symptoms.



Heat Exhaustion

A more severe consequence of extreme heat is heat exhaustion, surpassing the intensity of heat cramps. It occurs when the body loses excessive amounts of salt and water. This depletion arises when fluid and salt losses are not adequately replenished during periods of intense environmental heat and perspiration. Failure of the body's cooling mechanisms leads to heat exhaustion, which, if left untreated, can escalate into heat stroke.

Causes of Heat Stress

Heat stress can be caused by exposure to high temperatures, particularly in combination with high humidity, direct sun exposure, physical exertion, or wearing inappropriate clothing.

Certain people may find it more challenging to cope with heat stress than others. Heat intolerance can stem from a range of factors.

Personal risk factors include:

- Obesity (BMI ≥ 30 kg/m²)
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease
- Reduced physical fitness levels
- Usage of specific medications like diuretics (water pills) and certain psychiatric or hypertension drugs

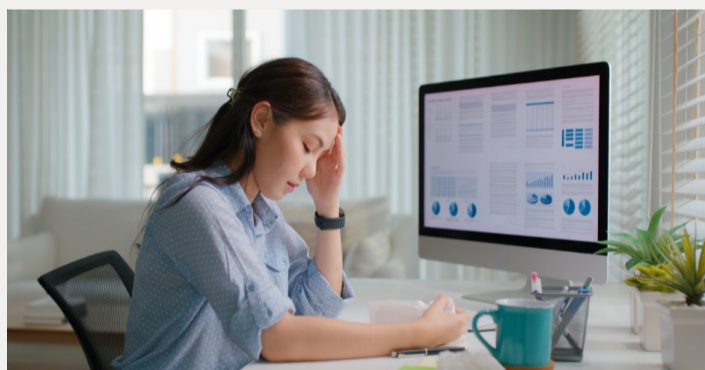
Read more:

https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/employer/heat-stress.htm#what_is

Symptoms

Symptoms of heat stress include:

- Profuse sweating
- Weakness and dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Muscle cramps
- Fainting
- In severe cases, it can lead to medical emergencies, such as loss of consciousness (coma).



Treatment

If someone shows signs of heat stress, it's essential to move them to a cooler place, remove excess clothing, fan them, and give them cool water to drink. If symptoms persist or worsen, seek medical attention immediately, as heat exhaustion and heat stroke can be life-threatening.

By understanding the causes, symptoms, risk factors, and preventive measures for heat stress, individuals and communities can take proactive steps to stay safe during hot weather conditions.

Here are some key points to stay safe and active during summertime:

1. When outdoors, look for shaded areas to protect yourself from direct sunlight.
2. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen to protect your skin from harmful UV rays.
3. Indoor ventilation is important. Make sure you have access to air-conditioned areas that have good air circulation.
4. Cool down your body temperature. Apply cool water to your neck, wrists and other pulse points to help your body cool down. You can also mist yourself with a spray bottle filled with cool water.
5. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Aim for a minimum of 8-10 cups. Avoid excessive consumption of sugary and caffeinated beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration.
6. Eat light, refreshing meals such as salads, fruits and vegetables to keep you hydrated and provide essential nutrients without weighing you down.
7. Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, and breathable clothing made of natural fabrics, like cotton or linen. Light colours reflect sunlight and can help keep you cooler.
8. Plan outdoor activities wisely. Schedule them during the cooler parts of the day, such as early morning or later in the evening.
9. Be mindful of high humidity. Help your body regulate its temperature by staying in air-conditioned spaces.
10. Pay attention to your body and be aware of any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, rapid heartbeat, cramps, or weakness. If you experience any of the symptoms of heat-related illness, seek medical help and take appropriate action.

By staying informed and taking proactive measures, we can all work together to prevent heat-related illnesses and ensure a safe summer for everyone.

Read more:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/heatreillness.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure/illness-first-aid>