

What causes heat exhaustion and heatstroke?

Heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, occur when your body can't keep itself cool. As the air temperature rises, your body stays cool when your sweat evaporates. On hot, humid days, the evaporation of sweat is slowed by the increased moisture in the air. When sweating isn't enough to cool your body, your body temperature rises, and you may become ill.

What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion happens when your body gets too hot. It can be caused by physical exercise or hot weather.

You may experience:

- Heavy sweating
- **Feeling weak** and/or confused
- **Dizziness**
- **Nausea**
- **Headache**
- Fast heartbeat
- Dark-colored urine, which indicates dehydration

Symptoms of dehydration include the following:

- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness or **fatigue**
- Extreme thirst
- **Headache**
- Confusion
- **Dizziness or lightheaded feeling**
- No tears when crying

What is heatstroke?

Heatstroke is when the internal temperature of the body reaches 104°F. It can happen when your body gets too hot during strenuous exercise or when exposed to very hot temperatures, or it can happen after heat exhaustion isn't properly treated. Heatstroke is much more serious than heat exhaustion. Heatstroke can cause damage to your organs and brain.

- High fever (104°F or higher)
- Severe headache
- Dizziness and feeling light-headed

- A flushed or red appearance to the skin
- Lack of sweating
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fast heartbeat
- Fast breathing
- Feeling confused, anxious or disoriented
- Seizures

How can I prevent heat illness?

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat or using an umbrella.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more.
- **Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity. Drink extra water all day.** Keep in mind that heat-related illnesses are not only caused by high temperatures and a loss of fluids, but also a lack of salt in the body.
- **Drink fewer beverages that contain caffeine (such as tea, coffee and soda) or alcohol.**
- Schedule vigorous outdoor activities for cooler times of the day -- before 10:00 a.m. and after 6:00 p.m.
- **During an outdoor activity, take frequent breaks. Drink water or other fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty.** If you have clear, pale urine, you are probably drinking enough fluids. Dark-colored urine is an indication that you're dehydrated.

One more thing I'll be thinking about:

Diabetic kids. Heat makes blood sugar harder to control. Diabetics should test it often and drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration.