

# BEAT the HEAT

## *Summertime Tips for Keeping Cool*

A graphic of a yellow sun with rays, partially obscured by a dark red horizontal bar.

### SUN SENSE

In hot, humid weather, be alert to the threat of too much sun. Good judgement and some simple precautions will help avoid possible dangers related to the heat.

On a warm day, the temperature in a parked car can reach 160 degrees in 7 to 10 minutes, even with partially opened windows. Don't leave children, elderly persons, or pets waiting in parked cars. This is the number one cause of heat stroke.

Heat waves are especially threatening for senior citizens – if you know someone who may be vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, make a phone call or stop by for a visit to be sure that they are safe.

# Know your limits when dealing with the **HEAT!**

**H**eat stress is most likely to happen when temperatures reach 90 degrees and remain that way for two days or more. High humidity conditions are another contributing factor. Those most at risk are older people in non-air conditioned surroundings, people with disabilities, overweight or underweight people on certain medications, and the very young. Under the right combination of heat, humidity, and activity, even the best athlete can suffer from heat stress.

## Symptoms of Heat Stress

- Dizziness
- No Sweating
- Rapid Heartbeat
- Chest Pain
- Diarrhea/Cramps
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Breathing Problems
- Headache
- Confusion

**Prevention** is the best approach in dealing with heat-related problems. Knowing what to do when a heat wave hits can help avoid potential summertime dangers. These simple tips from the Pennsylvania Department of Health can help to keep you cool and safe:

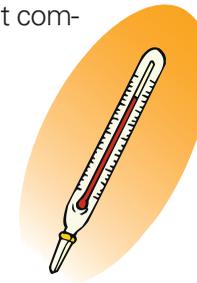
- drink plenty of water and other liquids, but avoid those with alcohol or caffeine
- avoid long periods in the direct sun or in unventilated rooms
- avoid vigorous activity when it is hot and humid



- keep air conditioning or fans running
- wear light-colored, lightweight, loose-fitting clothing
- wear a hat or other head covering when out in the sun
- take frequent cold baths or showers and remain in a cool place
- take frequent trips outside to cool off when in a crowded environment
- wear appropriate sunscreen protection

**Heat Cramps** can occur in a young healthy adult doing hard work or athletics in the heat and sun. The most common symptoms are:

- an elevated temperature of about 102 degrees
- an increased pulse and breathing rate
- moderate to severe cramping in the arms, legs and shoulder muscles
- a sense of generalized weakness and headache
- heavy perspiration and flushed skin



The muscle cramps can be relieved by gentle massage or having the individual drink a salt solution consisting of one teaspoon of salt dissolved in one quart of water. Give sips. If nausea occurs, discontinue.

**Heat Exhaustion** is progressively more serious than heat cramps, and results from excessive loss of both water and salt. The symptoms are:

- body temperature of about 104 degrees, although normal temperature is possible
- headache, vomiting, and dizziness
- fainting may occur
- skin is flushed and damp, but may be cold, pale and clammy
- weak pulse

If heat exhaustion occurs, remove the person from the heat and humidity. Loosen clothing, apply cool wet cloths and give sips of water. If vomiting prevents fluid intake, discontinue – IV therapy may be necessary. If left untreated, heat exhaustion may progress to heat stroke. Seek immediate medical attention.

**Heat Stroke** is a true medical emergency requiring prompt, life-saving action.

Classic symptoms include:

- body temperature greater than 105 degrees
- hot dry skin due to the body's inability to remove heat through sweating
- rapid strong pulse

More severe symptoms are:

- delirium
- unconsciousness
- hallucinations
- muscle rigidity
- seizures

When any symptoms occur, the individual should be taken to a hospital emergency room for treatment. Call 911 immediately. Do not give fluids.

Heat stroke may fall in two categories based upon the age and activity level of the individual.

**Classic Heat Stroke** occurs more often in the elderly or chronically ill who are unable to rid their body of heat due to their age or level of infirmity.

**Exertional Heat Stroke** occurs more often in healthy individuals who engage in strenuous work or activity in a hot and humid climate. Symptoms for the two groups are similar, but the younger person may exhibit profuse sweating instead of the hot dry skin of the elderly.

Heat stroke must be treated as a life-threatening emergency. Rapid cooling is the cornerstone of treatment and should begin as soon as possible by removing the person from the hot environment.

We tend to take severe winter weather more seriously than hot weather, but the fact is, a heat wave can be just as hazardous as a blizzard. People stay indoors and take precautions during dangerous winter conditions. They should also take precautions during heat waves.

