

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke: Symptoms and treatment

Heat Exhaustion

Heat Stroke

What is it?

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body loses an excessive amount of water and salt found in sweat. It can develop after exposure to high temperatures without enough fluid replacement. It can lead to heat stroke if it is left untreated.

Heat stroke occurs when the body's temperature rises rapidly (to 40°C/104°F or above) and the body is unable to cool down. It can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Symptoms

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Weak pulse
- Heavy sweating
- Pale skin
- Weakness/exhaustion
- Muscle cramps

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Strong pulse
- Red, hot and dry skin (no sweating)
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness

Treatment

- Move the person to a cooler location
- Encourage the person to cool down by sponging with cool (not cold) water, taking a shower, bath or swim
- Provide sips of cool water

- **Dial 911 – This is a medical emergency!**
- While waiting for medical assistance, help the person to cool down by sponging with cool (not cold) water
- Do not give the person any fluids (this may cause the person to vomit or choke)