

# Excessive Heat

## Know the Terms

**HEAT ADVISORY:** Issued by the National Weather Service when the heat index is expected to reach at least 100°F but less than 105°F, for less than three hours per day, or when nighttime lows are expected to remain above 80°F.

**EXCESSIVE HEAT WATCH:** Issued by the National Weather Service, 24-48 hours in advance, when it is possible the heat index will reach 105°F for at least three hours for at least two consecutive days, or when there is a predicted heat index of 115°F.

**EXCESSIVE HEAT WARNING:** Issued by the National Weather Service 24 hours in advance of a possible 105°F heat index for at least three hours for at least two consecutive days, or when there is a predicted heat index of 115°F.

**HEAT WAVE:** A period of abnormally and uncomfortable hot and unusually humid weather. Typically a heat wave lasts two or more days.

**HEAT INDEX:** The Heat Index (HI) or the “Apparent Temperature” is an accurate measure of how hot it really feels when the Relative Humidity (RH) is added to the actual air temperature.

**OZONE HEALTH ADVISORY:** Issued when ozone levels in outdoor air are predicted to be greater than 0.08 parts per million when averaged over an eight-hour period.

## Health Hazards

**Sunburn:** Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches. Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally. Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.

**Heat Cramps:** Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles; heavy sweating. Get the victim to a cooler location. Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms. Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. (Do not give liquids with caffeine or alcohol.) Discontinue liquids, if victim is nauseated.

**Heat Exhaustion:** Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale, or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal body temperature is possible, but temperature will likely rise. Fainting or dizziness, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, and headaches are possible. Get victim to lie down in a cool place. Loosen or remove clothing. Apply cool, wet clothes, Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place. Give sips of water if victim is conscious. Be sure water is consumed slowly. Give half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Discontinue water if victim is nauseated. Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs.

**Heat Stroke ( a severe medical emergency):** High body temperature (105+); hot, red, dry skin; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid shallow breathing. Victim will probably not sweat unless victim was sweating from recent strenuous activity, Possible unconsciousness. **Call 9-1-1** or emergency medical services, or get the victim to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Move victim to a cooler environment. Removing clothing, Try a cool bath, sponging, or wet sheet to reduce body temperature. Watch for breathing problems. Use extreme caution. Use fans and air conditioners.

### **Protective Safety Measures**

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun.
- When in the sun wear sunscreen of at least 15 SPF, and a wide brimmed hat to protect your head and face.
- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available. Keep rooms well ventilated with open windows and fans.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings such as libraries, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities. Circulating air can cool the body by increasing the perspiration rate of evaporation. The warmest part of the day is usually between 11 am and 4 pm.
- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty, avoid beverages containing alcohol, caffeine or high amounts of sugar. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease; are on fluid-restricted diets; or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Make a special effort to Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and who spend much of their time alone, especially Seniors, young children and people with special needs.
- Never leave children, pets or others who require special care alone in closed vehicles.

- Avoid strenuous work or activity during the warmest part of the day. The sun's peak hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Use a buddy system when working in extreme heat, and take frequent breaks.
- Cool showers or baths may be helpful, but avoid extreme temperature changes. Extreme temperature changes may make you feel ill, nauseated, or dizzy.
- If you use a window fan, they work best at night to bring cool air in from the outside and to blow out hot air during the day.
- Contact your family to let them know that you are safe.
- Be aware of your pet's needs for water and shade.
- Conserve energy, during periods of extreme heat, electricity use rises. Conserve energy to help avoid power disruptions.
- Be prepared for a possible power outage, keep an emergency supply kit available, which should include a flashlight, battery powered radio, first aid kit and a bottled water. Open windows to ensure proper ventilation.
- Listen to local weather forecasts.
- Should you have an emergency contact 911 immediately.