

HEAT STRESS -- RECOGNIZING AND TREATING SYMPTOMS

You are encouraged to review the brochure and print a copy to share with someone you feel may be at risk of heat stress. Heat stress is an illness caused by heat, and both those working in hot and humid environments, and the elderly with problems are most at risk.

Recognizing and Treating Symptoms

What: Heat stress is an illness caused by heat

Where: Outdoors – In the sun
Indoors – Hot rooms

Who is at risk: Older people or people with the following medical conditions:

Heart or kidney failure
Overweight or underweight
Recent or past stroke
Infection or fever

High blood pressure
Reduced sweating
Diabetes
Diarrhoea

Mild and Moderate Warning Signs

Mild:

Decreased energy
Slight loss of appetite, nausea
Lightheadedness

Moderate:

Heavy sweating, thirst, faintness
Giddiness, headache, confusion

Serious Signs of Heat Stress

Throbbing headache
Mental confusion
Irritability, combativeness
Rapid heartbeat, difficulty in breathing
Dry skin (no sweating)
Vomiting, diarrhoea
Muscle cramps, staggering

Treatment:

Get person into cool place
Give more fluids to drink
Remove excess clothing
Rest

Call 000. This is an emergency.

How to reduce your risk of heat stress

- ✓ Drink plenty of water. Even if not thirsty
- ✓ Wear light-coloured, lightweight, loose clothing (cotton, synthetic blends are best)
- ✓ Wear a wide-brimmed hat, or use an umbrella for shade
- ✓ Spend time in air-conditioned areas
- ✓ Take extra cool baths and showers, and sprinkle yourself with water
- ✓ Keep windows open
- ✓ Use insulated drapes; keep blinds/shades closed during daylight hours
- ✓ Use a fan, but only when there is cool air blowing
- ✓ Don't engage in vigorous activity in the heat of the day
- ✓ Don't travel outside in the heat of day
- ✓ Don't wear dark, nylon clothing that is tight
- ✓ Don't drink alcohol or beverages containing caffeine (coffee, tea, colas)
- ✓ Don't eat hot, heavy foods
- ✓ Don't increase salt or potassium intake, or take salt tablets without doctor's OK
- ✓ Don't let heat in