

Stay Safe in the Heat....Know the signs of heatstroke

As our summer days continue to be extra hot with temperatures above 100 degrees, we should take extra precautions to not get overheated and the risk of heat stroke.

Excess heat can include heat stroke, severe dehydration, which can lead to hospitalization and even death on hot summer days.

Signs of heat related illnesses include muscle cramps due to salt depletion, and heat exhaustion which is marked by weakness, nausea, dizziness, and cool and clammy skin. When heat exhaustion is not relieved, it can lead to heat stroke, which can be dangerous.

Heat stroke is when your body overheats and no longer has enough water to keep it cool. You stop sweating. You may become dizzy, weak or unconscious. This can be a life-threatening condition and requires immediate medical attention.

It is best when it is hot to stay out of the heat in an air-conditioned area. If there is not any air conditioning available or the power has gone out, plan to spend a few hours in an air conditioned place, such as a store, the library or a movie theater.

During physical activity or strenuous work, your body temperature rises because muscles generate about 20 times more heat when you are active than at rest. As your temperature rises, you begin to sweat. Sweating takes the extra heat and releases it to keep the body cool.

The best way to beat dehydration is to drink water before you get thirsty. The more active you are the more water you lose.

It is very important to replace water lost through sweating, so you don't overheat. When water is not replaced, the body temperature goes up.

If you notice that you are not sweating during hard work or physical activity when you are outside, you could be suffering from heatstroke.

You can get water many ways; you don't always have to drink it. Water, juice, decaffeinated coffee and tea, lemonade, sports drinks, soft drinks, soups, milk, smoothies, oranges, lettuce, tomatoes, and cucumbers are some examples of beverages and foods that can hydrate your body.

Almost any nonalcoholic fluid will do as well as foods with high-water content. Try not to have too many drinks with caffeine as it causes your body to lose water faster.

Keep plenty of drinks and food that you like around while participating in physical activity or doing hard work. Drink more water than usual (two to four cups every hour while working or exercising outside). Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink more fluids.

You will know if you have taken in enough daily fluids by the color of your urine. It should be pale or clear in color.

If you or anyone else show signs of heatstroke, it is best to seek medical attention immediately. Until help arrives, drink about a glass of room temperature water, not cold water, every 15 minutes and lie down in a shaded area.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.