



Avoiding Heat Related Illness

With the change in seasons, and the onset of hot, summer days, a concern shared by those engaged in physical work is avoiding any injuries due to excessive heat. A simple solution is simply being properly hydrated. However, it is important to recognize the early symptoms of potential illness before a colleague is overwhelmed.

Sunburn: Not only are these painful at the time, but prolonged exposure to the sun could lead to skin cancer.

Heat Rash: The best way to avoid this is to bathe regularly and keep the skin clean and dry.

Heat Cramps: Painful cramps, often in the legs, arms or stomach can happen when sweating heavily. Not getting enough of the minerals in the diet to replace those lost in sweat can lead to this condition. Worsening of the symptoms of heat cramps may not show up until after work. Heat cramps can be avoided by drinking plenty of fluids and eating a balanced diet.

Heat Exhaustion: Symptoms include heavy sweating, being thirsty, having clammy or pale skin, feeling fatigued, and loss of muscular coordination. Behaviorally, symptoms include being anxious, fainting, confusion, persistent headache, nausea or vomiting and loss of appetite. A quick remedy would be to move the person to a cool area and encourage them to drink water to prevent dehydration. Medical intervention might be required if symptoms persist or worsen.

Heat Stroke: This is the most serious of the heat-related illnesses. Essentially, the body has lost its ability to cool itself. If symptoms are ignored, death can result. The most common symptom of heat stroke is the absence of sweating; the skin literally looks red, dry and hot. In addition, the pulse is rapid; headaches persist, followed by dizziness or nausea. They may appear confused or delirious. As the condition worsens, fainting, seizures or collapse may occur. Immediate medical intervention by professional rescuers is needed, with quick transporting to an emergency room or hospital. Because the victim might become unconsciousness, it is not recommended to give them anything to drink. This could be vomited and the discharged could be breathed into the lungs.

Constant activity related to work can result in loss of water, either through perspiration, exhalation and urination. Heat related illness can be prevented by consuming at least one gallon of water per day, over the course of physical activity.