

Keeping Your Cool This Summer

The hot months of summer are approaching! Working or playing outside in the heat can take a toll on your body if you're not properly prepared. It is important to regulate your body temperature by keeping adequately hydrated and to acclimate your body gradually to be able to withstand increasingly hot conditions. Your body is equipped with its own "heat control mechanisms" which can become overworked in hot, humid and poorly ventilated areas. When you are exercising or working physically, your muscles generate heat as a metabolic by-product. Sweating is an effective means of dissipating heat when the air is dry or when there is a breeze. But when the humidity rises and the air becomes denser, sweat is not evaporated from the skin as readily. When the core body temperature rises too high, heat-related illnesses result: *heat cramps, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke*. Such heat stress, whether mild, moderate, or severe, can occur suddenly and can be very dangerous. It's important, therefore, to be able to recognize the warning signals so that you can take steps to prevent excess body temperatures and possible organ and brain damage. This chart will help you identify your body's heat stress signals and apply the appropriate action to prevent heat-related problems.

DISORDER	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENT
Heat Cramps	Muscle pain and spasms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drink water• Alternate tasks between strenuous and easy
Heat Exhaustion	Fatigue, nausea, headache Giddiness, clammy skin Red complexion Rapid heart rate, fainting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move to a cool area• Drink water moderately• Rest!
Heat Stroke	Hot, dry, red & blotchy skin Confusion Convulsions Loss of consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immerse in cool water or wrap in wet cloth• Get medical attention!

How To Prevent Heat Stress

- Drink plenty of water. On very hot days, try to drink a glass or more of water every hour.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored cotton clothing; keep a shirt on and a shade-producing hat.
- Take frequent rest breaks in the shade.
- Remember that it takes about 7 to 10 days to acclimate your body to heat.
- Avoid eating hot, heavy meals. Instead, eat cool, light meals.

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- Most people already consume too much salt; salt tablets are usually unnecessary.
- Don't drink alcohol (even the night before) or caffeinated drinks, as they cause dehydration.
- Talk to your doctor about possible heat-related reactions from any medications you may be taking.

For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant.

Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at

<http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>

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