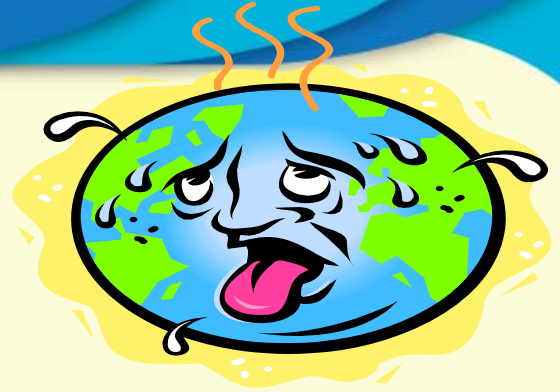


# Hot Under the Collar: HEAT STRESS

It's summertime. High temperatures and high humidity can potentially stress the body's ability to cool itself. As a result, heat illness becomes a special concern during the hot weather months. Let's take a look at the 3 major forms of heat illnesses: Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.



## HEAT CRAMPS

- Are caused from muscle spasms in the arms, legs or stomach.
- Caused by heavy sweating, especially when fluid loss is replaced by drinking water or other fluids that don't contain salt or potassium.
- Can be quite painful but doesn't result in permanent damage.

### Prevention:

- Drink electrolyte replacement drinks such as Gatorade or PowerAde during times of heat exposure.

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

- More serious than heat cramps.
- Occurs when the body's internal air-conditioning system is overworked but hasn't completely shut down.
- Surface blood vessels collapse from fluid loss and are unable to cool the blood.
- Symptoms: heavy sweating, headache, intense thirst, dizziness, fatigue, loss of coordination, nausea, impaired judgment, appetite loss, hyperventilation, tingling of hands and feet, anxiety, cool, moist skin, weak and rapid pulse, low to normal blood pressure.

### Prevention:

- Move person to a cool location; Lie them down with feet slightly elevated.
- Loosen clothing and apply cold packs to groin, arm pits and back of neck. Until cold packs are available, apply cool wet cloths and fan them.
- Have them drink water or electrolyte drinks.
- Avoid strenuous activity for a day or two and keep hydrated.

## HEAT STROKE **call 911 !!!**

- Is life-threatening with a high death rate!
- The body has depleted its supply of water and salt and is unable to self-regulate its temperature.
- May first experience heat cramps and heat exhaustion, but not always.
- Sometimes mistaken for a heart attack.
- Symptoms: High body temperature > 103 degrees; absence of sweating (usually), hot red or flushed dry skin, rapid pulse, difficulty breathing, constricted pupils, any/all signs or symptoms of heat exhaustion

Advanced symptoms: seizures, convulsions, collapse, loss of consciousness, body temp > 108 degrees.

**Lower the body temperature!! Move to cool area, apply ice packs, fan, pour cool water on them. Basic life support measures until EMS arrives.**

Drink lots of fluids! Avoid caffeine.  
Take a break when overheated.  
Get enough sleep at night.  
With caution & common sense, you can avoid heat illnesses.

