

## Safety Alert – Heat Stress

With temperatures well into the 90’s this week, and more than likely the remainder of the summer, it’s important to work together to prevent heat-related illness. Understanding how to recognize heat-related illness and how to respond to it is critical. Most importantly, how to prevent this problem is first and foremost. Many of us are outdoors a great part of the day conducting work or just walking across campus to get to class or a meeting. Here is a guide to preventing, recognizing, and responding to heat-related illness.

Most heat-related illness can be prevented, or the risk of developing them can be reduced by following some basic principles, such as:

- **Water-Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.** Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink water or an electrolyte replacement beverage (Gatorade, Squincher, etc...). A good rule of thumb is to drink 4 cups of water every hour or a cup every 15 minutes.
  - Remember: Caffeine and alcohol are diuretics – they strip the body of fluids. If you drink coffee in the morning and/or alcohol, last night, you **MUST** replenish the body by drinking several cups of water before you start your day.
- **Rest-Rest breaks** help your body recover and cool down.
- **Shade-** Resting in the shade or air-conditioning helps you to cool down. Take more rest breaks during the hottest time of the day. Set up tents to create shade in outdoor working activities.
- **Clothing-** When working outside for extended periods, wear hats and light colored clothing.
- **Acclimatization-** Watch out for new employees conducting outdoor work. It usually takes about 14 days to become acclimated to temperature extremes.
- **Be prepared for an Emergency-** Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and respond with confidence (see the table below).

The chart below shows **symptoms** and **first aid measures** to take if a person shows signs of a heat-related illness.

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid*
<b>Heat stroke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confusion</li> <li>▪ Fainting</li> <li>▪ Seizures</li> <li>▪ Not sweating or red, hot, dry skin</li> <li>▪ Very high body temperature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Call 911 from an office phone or 7-2200 from a cell phone</b></li> <li>▪ While waiting for help to arrive:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Place person in shady, cool area</li> <li>▪ Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing</li> <li>▪ Fan air on person; apply cold packs in armpits</li> <li>▪ Wet person with cool water; apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice if available</li> <li>▪ Provide fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible</li> <li>▪ Stay with person until help arrives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Heat exhaustion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Cool, moist skin</li><li>▪ Heavy sweating</li><li>▪ Headache</li><li>▪ Nausea or vomiting</li><li>▪ Dizziness</li><li>▪ Light headedness</li><li>▪ Weakness</li><li>▪ Thirst</li><li>▪ Irritability</li><li>▪ Fast heart beat</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Have person sit or lie down in a cool, shady area</li><li>▪ Give person plenty of water or other cool beverages to drink</li><li>▪ Cool person with cold compresses/ice packs</li><li>▪ Call Police &amp; Public Safety (<b>7-2200 from a cell phone or 911 from office phone</b>) or accompany person to the Student Health Center if signs or symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes.</li></ul>
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\* Remember, if you are not a medical professional; use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.

For more information about heat-stress for training and educational purposes, reference the [Heat Stress Fact Sheet](#) on the Environmental Health and Safety website.