



# Quick Guide: Understanding and Responding to Heat-Related Illnesses

## Homeless Health Infectious Disease (HHID)

### General Guidance: If You Are Staying Outdoors

#### When temperatures are high:

- Drink water, juice, and sports drinks.
- **Avoid** drinks with caffeine (tea, coffee, cola, etc.) and alcohol during the hottest parts of the day.
  - Caffeine and alcohol dehydrate the body.
- Stay cool indoors.
  - Seek shelter in air-conditioned areas.
  - Spend the warmest part of the day in a shopping mall, day center, library, or other public/community building for a few hours.
- Wear light clothing and sunscreen.
  - Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
  - In the hot sun, a wide-brimmed hat will protect your face and head.
  - In the direct sun, use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and follow package directions.



#### If you are staying outdoors with a pet:

- Provide water to your pet every 15 to 20 minutes.
- Do not leave your pet in a parked car.
- Watch for signs and symptoms of heatstroke – excessive panting, drooling, glazed eyes, vomiting, lethargy and a rapid pulse.
- Press the back of your hand to the ground for seven seconds. If it is too hot for you, it is too hot for your pet.



Outdoor Temperature and Surfaces		
Air	Concrete	Asphalt
85° →	105° →	130°
91° →	125° →	140°

#### Sunburn:

- Sunburn is when skin becomes red, painful and unusually warm after being in the sun.
  - Sunburn can damage the skin and can lead to a more serious infection.
  - Seek medical help if there is a fever, blisters, or severe pain.
  - Sunburn is especially dangerous for infants.
- If you are sun-burnt:
  - Stay out of the sun until the burn has healed.
  - Bathe the sunburned area with cool water.
  - Use moisturizing lotion on sunburn, do not use salve, butter, or ointment.
  - Do not break blisters.

**Heat Index or Real Feel:** When temperature and humidity are factored in together.

**Ex:** if the air temperature is 96° F and the humidity is 65%, the real feel is 121° F. It is important to consider the heat index when assessing heat illness risk!

**Avoid** swimming in rivers due to unreliable rapids and pollution



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### General Guidance: If You Are Staying Outdoors

#### Heat cramps:

- **Heat index (90°F - 130°F)**
- Heat cramps are muscle pains and spasms triggered by heavy activity and dehydration.
  - Heat cramps usually involve the stomach muscles or the legs.
  - Stop all activity and find a cool place to sit.
- If you are experiencing heat cramps:
  - Drink water or a sports beverage, slowly and stop if you become nauseous.
  - Rest for a few hours to avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
  - Seek medical help if heat cramps continue for more than an hour.



clothing and apply cool wet clothes (if available).

- Moving to an air-conditioned space where available.
- Seek medical help if the symptoms continue for more than an hour.

#### Heat stroke:

#### Heat exhaustion:

- **Heat index (90°F - 130°F)**
- Heat exhaustion happens when the body has lost too much water and salt through sweat.
- Warning signs include heavy sweating, cramps, headache, nausea or vomiting, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, and fainting.
- If you or another individual are experiencing heat exhaustion, try:
  - Drinking cool nonalcoholic beverages
  - Resting, lying down, and elevating feet.
  - A cool shower or bath.
    - For those without bath access, remove or loosen excess



- **Heat index (130°F +)**
- Heat stroke happens when the body can no longer control its temperature and the body's core temperature rises rapidly (104° F or higher).
- Warning signs include red, hot, dry skin; very high body temperature; dizziness; unconsciousness; rapid pulse or throbbing headache.
- If you or another individual are experiencing heat stroke:
  - Call 911 immediately.
  - Move to a shady area.
  - Cool off with a cool shower, garden hose, etc. (if available).
  - Place cold wet washcloths on head, neck, armpits, and groin (if available).
  - Do not give the individual fluids to drink.
  - If emergency personnel are delayed, call the hospital for further instructions.

While less severe than a heatstroke, heat exhaustion is a **serious threat!**

Heat stroke **may cause** death or disability if treatment is not provided quickly.

Always call 9-1-1 if you suspect an immediate heat-related health crisis!