

Many homeless people are at risk for heat related emergencies

This may be due to:

- **Lack of access to drinking water**
- **Overdressing**
- **Medications** that can increase risk for dehydration (anti-depressants, sedatives, antihistamines, prednisone, haldol, lasix, etc)
- **Alcohol and street drugs** that may cause a person to forget to drink water, not to realize how hot they are becoming, or to pass out in the sun.
- **Medical Conditions** that can increase risk of dehydration (heart, respiratory, skin conditions, renal problems, mental illness, diabetes, infections, diarrhea, vomiting, etc).



Along with warmer temperatures and more sunshine comes the potential for hot weather emergencies.

Heat related emergencies happen when peoples' bodies have difficulty regulating temperature.

Be watchful for the signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion and ***intervene quickly to prevent heat stroke!***

For more information on heat related illness:

Centers for Disease Control:
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat

Public Health—Seattle & King County:
www.metrokc.gov/health/childcare/summersafety.htm
Summer Safety - Hot Weather



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www.metrokc.gov/health/hchn

Heat Emergencies



Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

Health Care for the Homeless Network
Phone: 206-296-5091

Summer is here! Help Prevent Heat Stroke...

1) Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are usually the *first sign* of possible heat exhaustion. They are caused by dehydration.

Signs & Symptoms:

- ➔ Pain or cramping in the legs and a feeling of tiredness.

What to do:

- ➔ Have the person rest in a cool or shady spot and drink a sports drink such as Gatorade or Powerade.
- ➔ If they feel better, no other treatment is needed.
- ➔ Encourage them to stay hydrated and avoid overheating.
- ➔ These actions can prevent the person from progressing to heat exhaustion.

Preventing Heat Stroke



- ➔ Drink lots of fluids (avoid caffeine, alcohol, and high sugar drinks). Carry a water bottle.
- ➔ Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- ➔ Stay indoors and, if at all possible, in an air conditioned place (mall, library, etc)
- ➔ Protect yourself from the sun with a wide brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen.
- ➔ Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening if possible. Rest often in shady areas during the heat of the day.

2) Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body has *difficulty* cooling itself. It needs a little help to keep from progressing to full heat stroke.

Signs & Symptoms:

- ➔ Cool, moist, or sweaty skin that is pale or flushed.
- ➔ Fatigued, weakness, dizziness, and nausea.

What to do:

- ➔ Cool the person down by having them sit in the shade.
- ➔ Pour cool water over the skin.
- ➔ Place a cold, wet towel on the back of the person's neck.
- ➔ Have the person sip cool water or Gatorade. (Not too fast, since vomiting will increase dehydration)
- ➔ If the signs and symptoms do not improve within an hour, or if they get worse in spite of your efforts, the person may have heat stroke. In such cases call 911.



3) Heat Stroke

In heat stroke, the body *cannot* regulate its temperature. This is a *medical emergency*. Children under five, elderly, obese people, and people with chronic conditions such as cancer, kidney disease, diabetes, heart conditions and skin diseases are especially susceptible.

Signs & Symptoms:

- ➔ Headache, dizziness, fatigue. Rapid pulse.
- ➔ Red, hot, dry skin. Inability to sweat.
- ➔ Rising body temperature (often 105F+).
- ➔ Confusion, delirium, or unconsciousness.

What to do:

- ➔ Call 911
- ➔ Have the person rest in a cool shady place.
- ➔ Have them *sip* a sports drink such as Gatorade or Powerade if they are able.
- ➔ Wet their skin with cool water, wet towels, or sheets. Place ice packs in the armpits, around the neck, and in the groin.
- ➔ Have a fan blowing directly at the person if possible

