



PREVENTING HEAT ILLNESS

Today's Date: _____

Disclaimer: This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. However, it is to be used for reference purposes only and is not intended to cover all aspects of the topic presented.

HEAT ILLNESS CAN BE DEADLY. Every year, thousands of workers become sick from exposure to heat, and some even die. **These illnesses and deaths are preventable.**

Who is affected? Workers exposed to hot and humid conditions are at risk of heat illness, especially those doing heavy work tasks or using bulky protective clothing and equipment. Some workers might be at greater risk than others if they have not built up a tolerance to hot conditions. Young children, older adults, people who are obese and people born with an impaired ability to sweat are at high risk of heatstroke. Other risk factors include dehydration, alcohol use, cardiovascular disease and certain medications.

What is heat illness? The body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially with high humidity, sweating isn't enough. Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels if precautions are not taken. Heat illnesses range from heat rash and heat cramps to heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke can result in death and requires **immediate medical attention.**

How can heat illness be prevented? Remember three simple words: **water, rest, shade.** Drinking water often, taking breaks, and limiting time in the heat can help prevent heat illness. Gradually build up to heavy work in hot conditions. This helps you build tolerance to the heat – or become acclimated. Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks during the first week of work. Also, it's important to know and look out for the symptoms of heat illness in yourself and others during hot weather. Plan for an emergency and know what to do — **acting quickly can save lives!**

When do I call 911?

If you observe the following signs of heat stroke, consider it to be a life threatening emergency:

- Rapid heartbeat
- Rapid and shallow breathing
- Cessation of sweating
- Irritability, confusion or unconsciousness
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Headache
- Nausea
- Fainting, which may be the first sign in older adults

Drink water often

Rest in the shade

Report heat symptoms early

Know what to do in an emergency

Attended By: