Heat Related Illness

Heat Stroke
Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related disorder. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body’s temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails, and the body is unable to cool down. When heat stroke occurs, the body temperature can rise to 106 degrees Fahrenheit or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not given.

Symptoms of heat stroke include:
- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Hallucinations
- Chills
- Throbbing headache
- High body temperature
- Confusion/dizziness
- Slurred speech

First Aid
Take the following steps to treat a person with heat stroke:
- Call 911.
- Move the sick person to a cool shaded area.
- Cool the person using methods such as:
  - Soaking their clothes with water.
  - Spraying, sponging, or showering them with water.
  - Fanning their body.

Heat Exhaustion
Heat exhaustion is the body’s response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating. People most prone to heat exhaustion are those who are elderly, have high blood pressure, and those working in a hot environment.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:
- Heavy sweating
- Extreme weakness or fatigue
- Dizziness, confusion
- Nausea
- Clammy, moist skin
- Pale or flushed complexion
- Muscle cramps
- Slightly elevated body temperature
- Fast and shallow breathing

First Aid
Treat a person suffering from heat exhaustion with the following:
- Have them rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area.
- Have them drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic beverages.
- Have them take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.

Hydrate!!!
Drink plenty of water before, during and after physical activity to avoid dehydration. For low-calorie flavor, add slices of your favorite fruits such as melon, oranges, berries or even cucumber or mint to a pitcher of water and refrigerate for two hours.
**Heat Cramps**

Heat cramps usually affect those who sweat a lot during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body’s salt and moisture levels. Low salt levels in muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

**Symptoms**
- Muscle pain or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

**First Aid**

People with heat cramps should:
- Stop all activity, and sit in a cool place.
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- Not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention if any of the following apply:
  * The person has heart problems.
  * The person is on a low-sodium diet.
  * The cramps do not subside within one hour.

**Heat Rash**

Heat rash is a skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

**Symptoms**
- Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters.
- It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

**First Aid**

Those experiencing heat rash should:
- Stay in a cooler, less humid environment when possible.
- Keep the affected area dry.
- Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort.

**Heat Syncope**

Heat syncope is a fainting (syncope) episode or dizziness that usually occurs with prolonged standing or sudden rising from a sitting or lying position. Factors that may contribute to heat syncope include dehydration and lack of acclimatization.

**Symptoms of heat syncope include:**
- Light-headedness
- Dizziness
- Fainting

**First Aid**

Those experiencing heat syncope should:
- Sit or lie down in a cool place when they begin to feel symptoms.
- Slowly drink water, clear juice, or a sports beverage.

**Why is it so important to stay hydrated?**

Your body depends on water for survival. Did you know that water makes up more than half of your body weight? Every cell, tissue and organ in your body needs water to function correctly. For example, your body uses water to maintain its temperature, remove waste and lubricate joints. **Water is essential for good health!!**
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKERS

Workers should avoid exposure to extreme heat, sun exposure, and high humidity when possible. When these exposures cannot be avoided, workers should take the following steps to prevent heat stress:

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton.
- Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
- Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty. Approximately 1 cup every 15-20 minutes.
- Avoid alcohol, and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.

OUTDOOR EXERCISE TIPS

Think you’re ready to brave the heat? Watch the clock and buddy up! It’s best to avoid the outdoors in the early afternoon (about noon to 3 p.m.) because the sun is usually at its strongest, putting you at higher risk for heat-related illnesses. If you can, exercise with a friend, because it’s safer — and more fun — to have someone at your side. Here are some other tips:

Before you get started, apply a water-resistant sunscreen with at least SPF 15, and reapply it every two hours.

Get off on the right foot. You probably sweat the most in your shoes, so choose well-ventilated shoes and look for socks that repel perspiration. Foot powders and antiperspirants can also help with sweat.

Dress for the heat. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing in breathable fabrics such as cotton, or a newer fabric that repels sweat. Add a hat and/or sunglasses.

Drink up. Stay hydrated by drinking a few cups of water before, during and after your exercise. Avoid caffeinated or alcoholic beverages.

Take regular breaks. Find some shade or a cool place, stop for a few minutes, hydrate and start again.
These are the main things affecting your body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather:

- High humidity. When the humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly, which keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.
- Personal factors. Age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use can play a role in whether a person can cool off enough in very hot weather.

Here are some facts about which people are at greatest risk for heat-related illness and what protective actions to take to prevent illness or death:

- People who are at highest risk are the elderly, the very young, and people with chronic diseases or mental illness.
- But even young and healthy people can get sick from the heat if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.
- Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. If a home is not air-conditioned, people can reduce their risk for heat-related illness by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned.

You can take these steps to prevent heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths during hot weather:

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don’t feel thirsty.
- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.
- Pace yourself.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Do not leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.

**How much water should I drink each day?**

There are different recommendations for water intake each day. Most people have been told they should be drinking 6 to 8 8-ounce glasses of water each day, which is a reasonable goal. However, different people need different amounts of water to stay hydrated. Most healthy people can stay well hydrated by drinking water and other fluids whenever they feel thirsty. For some people, fewer than 8 glasses may be enough. Other people may need more than 8 glasses each day.

Some people are at higher risk of dehydration, including those who get a lot of exercise, have certain medical conditions, are sick, or are not able to get enough fluids during the course of the day. Older adults are also at higher risk. As you age, your brain may be unable to sense dehydration and send the signals for thirst.

If you are concerned that you may not be drinking enough water, check your urine. If your urine is consistently colorless or light yellow, you are most likely staying well hydrated.
TIPS FOR STAYING HYDRATED

- Keep a bottle of water with you during the day. Consider carrying a reusable water bottle and filling it from the tap rather than purchasing bottled water, which is expensive and creates plastic bottle waste.
- If plain water doesn't interest you, try adding a slice of lemon or lime to your drink.
- If you're going to be exercising, make sure you drink water before, during and after your workout.
- Start and end your day with a glass of water.
- When you're feeling hungry, drink water. The sensation of thirst is often confused with hunger. True hunger will not be satisfied by drinking water. Drinking water may also contribute to a healthy weight loss plan, as some research suggests drinking water will help you feel full.
- Drink on a schedule if you have trouble remembering to drink water. For example, drink water when you wake up; at breakfast, lunch and dinner; and when you go to bed. Or drink a small glass of water at the top of each hour.
- Drink water when you go to a restaurant. Not only does it keep you hydrated, but it's free!
Ergonomic Assessments

FYI: Christine Body has been doing ergonomic assessments since 1996 and is available to do them here on campus. She can be reached at 312-2770 and would be happy to assist you with any questions or issues.

July Word Search

For a chance to win a great prize, complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to lisa.drake@oswego.edu OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for July was Chelsea Kowalski! Look for: Heat Related Illness, Stroke, Exhaustion, First Aid, Cramps, Rash, Syncope, Hydrate, Exercise, Humidity, Dehydration, Air Conditioning, Water Bottle, Sweating, Temperature, Sunburn, Sun Exposure.

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Marty Says: Hey Humans! You think YOU'RE hot this summer??? How would you like to have a fur coat on? Please keep that in mind when you take us doggies for our walks. We get really hot in this weather. Hot pavement hurts our paws so please take it easy on us. Don’t even think about “walking” us when you’re riding your bike—BAD IDEA and not at all cool! Walk us in early morning and later evening when it’s cooler. Also, don’t forget that many of us LOVE to swim! Nothing like getting in that nice cold lake water to cool us off! When Mom takes me swimming she has a really hard time getting me OUT of the water! Oh, one more important thing...DO NOT LEAVE US IN YOUR CAR!!! We’d rather stay home! AND don’t forget to give us LOTS of fresh cold water to drink...Thank you!!!

Need Help to Quit Smoking?

Oswego Health offers two smoking cessation classes:
First Wednesday of Each Month at The Manor at Seneca Hill 6:30 to 9:30 PM
Second Monday of Each Month at Oswego Hospital 2-4 PM
Smoking Cessation Support Group second Monday of each month 6-7:30 PM at Oswego Hospital.