

## **Reduce Heat Related Illness**

1. Increase your fluid intake. Do not wait until you are thirsty to drink.
2. If you must exercise, drink 2 to 4 glasses of cool, non-alcoholic fluids each hour. If you are going to be active for more than 90 minutes, a sports beverage is recommended.
3. Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going outside.
4. Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
5. Stay indoors, and, if possible, stay in an air-conditioned place.
6. Provide pets with plenty of water and shade.
7. NEVER leave small children, pets, disabled or elderly individuals in a closed, parked vehicle.
8. Check-up on family and neighbors in the event of extreme heat.



## **What is Extreme Heat?**

Several factors affect the body's ability to cool itself during extremely hot weather. When humidity is high, sweat will not evaporate as quickly, preventing the body from releasing heat quickly. Other conditions related to risk include age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug and alcohol use.

### **Who is at risk?**

Although anyone can suffer from a heat-related illness, the elderly, the very young, and people with mental illness and chronic disease are at highest risk. Check on family and neighbors often during extreme heat.

### **Protect Yourself**

Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. If you do not have air-conditioning, visit a local public facility, such as the library, shopping mall, or community center, that is air-conditioned.

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**HEAT WAVES:  
Are you ready?**



## **A Guide to Promote Personal Health and Safety in an Extreme Heat Event**

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**Meriden Health Department  
City of Meriden, CT**



## Hot Weather Health Emergencies:

Know the symptoms of heat disorders  
and overexposure to the sun

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### HEAT STROKE:

Also known as sunstroke, heat stroke is life-threatening. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweat to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can also rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

Symptoms include:

- Vomiting.
- Decreased alertness level of complete loss of consciousness.
- High body temperature (sometimes as high as 105°F).
- Skin may still be moist or the victim may stop sweating and the skin may be red, hot, and dry.
- Rapid, weak pulse.
- Rapid, shallow breathing.

CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY if someone shows any of these symptoms.

### HEAT EXHAUSTION:

Typically occurs when people exercise heavily or work in a warm, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Fluid loss causes blood flow to decrease in the vital organs, resulting in a form of shock. With heat exhaustion, sweat does not evaporate as it should, possibly because of high humidity or too many layers of clothing. As a result, the body is not cooled properly.

Symptoms include:

- Cool, moist, pale skin (the skin may be red right after physical activity).
- Headache.
- Nausea.
- The skin may or may not feel hot.
- Dizziness and weakness or exhaustion.



### HEAT CRAMPS:

Heat cramps are muscular pains and spasms due to heavy exertion. They usually involve the abdominal muscles or the legs. It is generally thought that the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes the cramps.

Symptoms include:

- Rapid heartbeat.
- Hot, sweaty skin.
- Dizziness.
- Fainting and exhaustion.
- Nausea and vomiting.

### Know How to Care for Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

- Remove the person from the heat.
- Remove or loosen clothing.
- Fan the person.
- Give small amounts of cool water, but only if the person is fully conscious.
- Apply cool towels to the body.
- Take steps to reduce shock.
- Call 9-1-1 if the person's condition does not improve.