



Hyperthermia/Heat Exposure

Aliases

Heat cramps
Heat stroke

Heat edema
Heat syncope

Heat exhaustion
Hyperthermia

Definitions

1. **Heat Cramps:** are muscle cramps usually in the legs and abdominal wall. Patient temperature is normal
2. **Heat Exhaustion:** has both salt and water depletion usually of a gradual onset. As it progresses tachycardia, hypotension, elevated temperature, and very painful cramps occur. Symptoms of headache, nausea, and vomiting occur. Heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke
3. **Heat Stroke:** occurs when the cooling mechanism of the body ceases due to temperature overload and/or electrolyte imbalances. Patient core temperature is usually greater than 104°F. When no thermometer is available, it is distinguished from heat exhaustion by altered level of consciousness, seizures, or coma
4. **Heat Syncope:** transient loss of consciousness with spontaneous return to normal mentation, attributable to heat exposure

Patient Care Goals

1. Cooling and rehydration
2. Mitigate high-risk for decompensation
3. Mitigate high-risk for agitation and uncooperative behavior

Patient Presentation

Inclusion Criteria

1. Heat cramps
2. Heat exhaustion
3. Heat stroke
4. Heat syncope
5. Heat edema
6. Stimulant drug abuse
7. Delirium with agitated behavior [See [Agitated or Violent Patient/Behavioral Emergency Guideline](#)]

Exclusion Criteria

1. Fever from infectious or inflammatory conditions
2. Malignant hyperthermia
3. Serotonin syndrome
4. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome

Patient Management

Assessment

1. Patient Assessment:
 - a. Age