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# Heat Illness

**Also called:** Heat exhaustion, Heat stroke, Sunstroke

Your body normally cools itself by sweating. During hot weather, especially when it is very humid, sweating just isn't enough to cool you off. Your body temperature can rise to dangerous levels and you can develop a heat illness.

Most heat illnesses happen when you stay out in the heat too long. Exercising and working outside in high heat can also lead to heat illness. Older adults, young children, and those who are sick or overweight are most at risk. Taking certain medicines or drinking alcohol can also raise your risk.


Heat-related illnesses include:

- Heat stroke - a life-threatening illness in which body temperature may rise above 106 °F (41 °C) in minutes. Symptoms include dry skin, a rapid, strong pulse, dizziness, nausea, and confusion. If you see any of these signs, get medical help right away.
- Heat exhaustion - an illness that can happen after several days of exposure to high temperatures and not enough fluids. Symptoms include heavy sweating, rapid breathing, and a fast, weak pulse. If it is not treated, it can turn into heat stroke.
- Heat cramps - muscle pains or spasms that happen during heavy exercise. You usually get them in your abdomen, arms, or legs.
- Heat rash - skin irritation from excessive sweating. It is more common in young children.

You can lower your risk of heat illness by drinking fluids to prevent dehydration [<https://medlineplus.gov/dehydration.html>] , replacing lost salt and minerals, and limiting your time in the heat.

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*


## Start Here

- Extreme Heat [<https://www.ready.gov/heat>] (Department of Homeland Security)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.ready.gov/es/calor-extremo>]
- Extreme Heat and Your Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/extreme-heat/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
Also in Spanish [[https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/extremeheat/heat\\_guide.html](https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html)]
- Hot Weather Safety for Older Adults [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>]  
 (National Institute on Aging)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol/hipertermia/hipertermia>]

## Symptoms

- About Heat and Your Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html>]

## Prevention and Risk Factors

- Beat the Heat: Staying Safe in the Summertime [<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2021/06/beat-heat>]  
 (National Institutes of Health)  
Also in Spanish [<https://salud.nih.gov/recursos-de-salud/nih-noticias-de-salud/combater-el-calor>]
- Extreme Heat Safety [<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/extreme-heat-safety.html>] (American Red Cross)

## Treatments and Therapies

- First Aid for Heat Exhaustion [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/first-aid-heat-exhaustion/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Heat Cramps, First Aid [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/first-aid-heat-cramps/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Heatstroke, First Aid [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/first-aid-heatstroke/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)


## Related Issues

- Protect Your Heart in the Heat [<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/what-is-cardiovascular-disease/protect-your-heart-in-the-heat>] (American Heart Association)
- Safety Tips for Hot Weather Exercise [<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayoqahot-weather-exercise/>]  
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)



## Specifics

- Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke/?adfree=true>]  
(American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/agotamiento-por-calor-y-golpe-de-calor-es/?adfree=true>]
- Heat Rash or Prickly Heat (Miliaria Rubra) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/miliaria-rubra/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)
- Heat Stress and Workers [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/heat-stress/about/>] (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health)

## Videos and Tutorials

- Heat-Related Illnesses [<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/know-when-to-go/heat-related-illnesses>]  
 (American College of Emergency Physicians)

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Dehydration [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Dehydration%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  
 (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Heat Stress Disorders [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Heat+Stress+Disorders%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)


## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Improving heat stress prevention through targeted education in hot and humid... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40751142>]
- Article: Heat health risk assessment and identification of priority control areas in... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40740388>]
- Article: Assessing Heat-Health Vulnerability Through Temporal, Demographic, and Spatial Lenses: A Time-Stratified... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724191>]
- Heat Illness -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Heat+Stress+Disorders%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AN>]

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## Find an Expert

- American Red Cross [<https://www.redcross.org/>]  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja.html>]
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Center for Environmental Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.html>]  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/>]
- National Institute on Aging [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>]   
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol>]

## Children

- Heat Stroke and Hot Cars [<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/health--safety-tips/heat-stroke-and-hot-cars>]  
(American College of Emergency Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/en-espanol/golpe-de-calor-y-vehiculos-calientes>]
- Keeping Kids Safe from the Dangers of Hot Cars [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hot-car-dangers.html>]  
(Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/hot-car-dangers.html>]
- Rash or Prickly Heat (Miliaria Rubra) [<https://skinsight.com/skin-conditions/miliaria-rubra/child/?lmiw9cApl=1>] (VisualDX)

## Older Adults

- Exercising Outdoors: Safety Tips for Older Adults [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-and-physical-activity/safety-tips-exercising-outdoors-older-adults>]  (National Institute on Aging)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol/ejercicio/consejos-seguridad-personas-mayores-cuando-hacen-ejercicio-al-aire-libre>]
- Heat and Older Adults (Aged 65+) [<https://www.cdc.gov/heat-health/risk-factors/heat-and-older-adults-aged-65.html>]  
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/es/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.html>]
- Hot Weather Safety for Older Adults [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safety/hot-weather-safety-older-adults>]  
 (National Institute on Aging)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol/hipertermia/hipertermia>]

## Patient Handouts

- Heat emergencies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000056.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000056.htm>]
- How to avoid overheating during exercise [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000865.htm>]  
(Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000865.htm>]
- Protecting Yourself from Heat Stress [<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-114/pdfs/2010-114.pdf>]  
(National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) - **PDF**  
Also in Spanish [[https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/docs/2010-114\\_sp/](https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/niosh/docs/2010-114_sp/)]
- Working in the Heat: Know the Hazards [<https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA4401.pdf>]  
(Occupational Safety and Health Administration) - **PDF** - Information on Workers and Heat risks



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Heat emergencies [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000056.htm>]

Heat intolerance [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003094.htm>]

How to avoid overheating during exercise [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000865.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

Dehydration [<https://medlineplus.gov/dehydration.html>]

Sun Exposure [<https://medlineplus.gov/sunexposure.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Heat Illness* is the National Institute on Aging [<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>]

## NIH MedlinePlus Magazine

Hotter Days Put Human Health at Risk [<https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/hotter-days-put-human-health-at-risk>]

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