

STAYING SAFE WHEN TEMPERATURES SOAR

by B. Kay Sugg

Extreme heat (such as temperatures in the high 80s or above) causes more than 600 deaths in the US each year. These deaths are preventable and learning more about what heat-related illnesses are and what signs to watch out for will help you to stay safe this summer. While elderly people, the very young, and those who are ill or on certain medications are more vulnerable to heat-related illness, anyone—even the most healthy and fit—can suffer from heat stress or heatstroke.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

Heat exhaustion occurs when your body cannot cool down properly. Causes of heat exhaustion include exposure to high temperatures, particularly when combined with high humidity, and strenuous physical activity. Normally, sweating during exertion helps to cool the body down, but if sweating is not enough to cool the body down, one's body temperature can rise to a dangerous level (up to 104 F and above) causing heatstroke which requires emergency treatment. If not treated immediately, damage to your heart, brain, muscles, and kidneys can occur—and can even result in death.

HEATSTROKE

Heatstroke is more likely to occur in someone who exercises or works in extreme heat, especially if they are not accustomed to high temperatures. Another type of heatstroke, called nonexertional heatstroke, occurs most often in elderly adults and chronically ill people who are in very hot and humid weather for a prolonged period of time.



HEAT STROKE

HOW TO AVOID HEATSTROKE

Below are simple steps you can take to prevent heatstroke during hot weather:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight clothing.
- Get acclimated to the heat and limit time working or exercising in it until you are used to the temperature.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest parts of the day.
- Protect against sunburn with sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses.
- Be cautious if you take medications or have a condition that increases your risk of heat-related problems.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEATSTROKE

- High body temperature.
- Cool, moist skin with goose bumps when in the heat (this results when brought on by strenuous exercise).
- Altered mental state or behavior, such as confusion, slurred speech, fainting, or agitation.
- Skin that feels hot and dry to the touch or only slightly moist.
- Nausea and vomiting.
- Flushed skin (may turn red).
- Racing heart rate.
- Rapid, shallow breathing.
- Headache.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

- Call 911 immediately.
- Move (yourself/the affected person) to a shady or cool environment (inside to air conditioning if possible).
- Remove any excess clothing.
- Cool them down with any means available: sponge with water, spray with garden hose, put cold, wet towels on the affected person's head, neck, armpit, and groin. Use ice packs if they are available.
- If inside, put the person in a cool tub of water or a shower.

The most important thing to remember if you suspect that someone is suffering a heatstroke is to get help even if the person protests and says he/she will be fine. Your action on his or her behalf may very well save his/her life.

Sources:

The Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov>



Homemade Citrus Electrolyte Drink

- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 cups of water/raw coconut water
- 1/8 tsp Himalayan pink salt
- Two tablespoons organic raw honey/natural maple syrup

Put all the ingredients in a blender and blend well.



Source: <https://dontmesswithmama.com/homemade-citrus-electrolyte-drink/>

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16.8 FL OZ (500 mL)