

# HOW TO PREVENT HEAT ILLNESS

Employees who are able to recognize the symptoms of heat illness in the workplace can prevent injuries due to heat exposure.

## RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS

There are multiple types of heat-related illnesses. The severity of these illnesses ranges from the mild symptoms of heat rash to the much more severe symptoms of heat stroke.



HEADACHE OR DIZZINESS



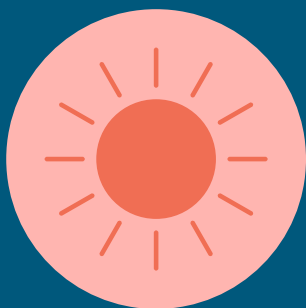
ELEVATED BODY TEMPERATURE



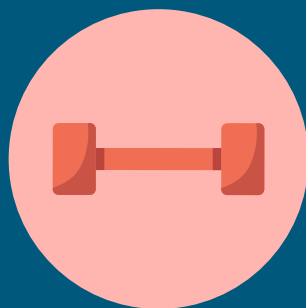
NAUSEA

## KNOW THE RISK FACTORS

Along with directed sun exposure, some other factors increase the risk of heat illness for you and your coworkers:



HIGH TEMPERATURE  
AND HUMIDITY



HEAVY PHYSICAL LABOR



LOW FLUID INTAKE



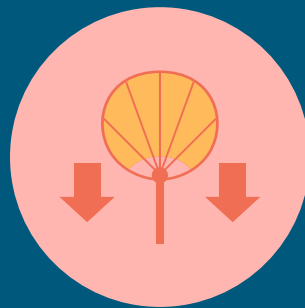
ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION



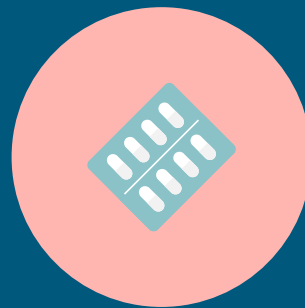
WEARING HEAVY CLOTHING



HEALTH COMPLICATIONS



LITTLE OR NO AIR  
MOVEMENT



MEDICATIONS  
(INCLUDING THOSE TREATING LOW  
BLOOD PRESSURE OR ALLERGIES)



RECENT EXPOSURE TO HOT  
WORKING CONDITIONS

### WHAT IS HEAT STROKE?

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition and requires immediate medical attention. Taking quick action can save lives. The affected employee should be removed from sun exposure and placed in a cool/shaded area, be given cold water to drink, have their unnecessary clothing removed, and be accompanied by another person until medical personnel arrives or the employee's symptoms diminish.

POST30 11/23

SCAN THE QR CODE



TO LEARN MORE

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM HEAT STRESS

**Purpose:** To increase awareness of symptoms of heat illness in the workplace and discuss how to prevent injuries due to heat exposure.

**Instructions:** Read aloud the following sections of this toolbox talk. While reading this toolbox talk, the front side of the poster should be shown to colleagues.

**Duration:** 8-14 minutes

### SYMPTOMS OF HEAT ILLNESS

(1-2 MINUTES)

There are multiple types of heat-related illnesses. The severity of these illnesses ranges from the mild symptoms of heat rash to the much more severe symptoms of heat stroke. Common symptoms to look out for include:

- Confusion
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Elevated body temperature (103°F)

Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition and requires immediate medical attention. Taking quick action can save lives. The affected employee should be removed from sun exposure and placed in a cool/shaded area, be given cold water to drink, have any unnecessary items of clothing removed, and be accompanied by another person until medical personnel arrives or their symptoms diminish.

*Reference:* <https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure>

### RISK FACTORS

(1-2 MINUTES)

Along with direct sun exposure, some other factors that increase the risk of heat illness for you and your coworkers include:

- Heat temperature and humidity
- Heavy physical labor
- Little or no air movement
- Low fluid intake
- Poor physical condition
- Health complications
- Wearing heavy clothing or personal protective equipment
- Some medications, including those treating low blood pressure or allergies
- Recent exposure to hot working conditions
- Alcohol consumption

### HOW TO PREVENT HEAT ILLNESS

(1-2 MINUTES)

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the following steps should be taken to prevent heat illness:

- Learn how to combat the risk factors for heat illness
- Learn how to recognize symptoms of heat illness in yourself and others
- Drink plenty of cool drinking water throughout the day; do not wait to drink water until you are thirsty
- Replace regular use of caffeinated beverages and energy drinks with water or electrolyte sports drinks
- Take frequent breaks out of the sun or in air-conditioned areas
- Eat healthy meals or snacks regularly to replenish your electrolytes
- Utilize a portable shade on extra-hot days, if possible
- Partner with a coworker and remind each other to take breaks
- Look out for new employees or those who are returning to work after vacation; gradually increase their level of physical labor and provide them with more frequent rest and water breaks to help them acclimate to working in the heat

### DISCUSSION

(5-8 MINUTES)

Ask the following questions to the large group. Allow 5-8 minutes for discussion.

- Have you ever experienced symptoms of heat illness?
- What are some tips or tricks you use to keep cool in the heat?
- Do we have any job tasks for which we need to evaluate the risk of heat illness and develop solutions?

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