

## Heat Exhaustion: What You Need To Know

### What causes heat exhaustion?

Heat-related illness, such as heat exhaustion, occurs when your body can't keep itself cool. As the air temperature rises, your body stays cool when your sweat evaporates. On hot, humid days, the evaporation of sweat is slowed by the increased moisture in the air. When sweating isn't enough to cool your body, your body temperature rises, and you may become ill.

### What is heat exhaustion?

Heat exhaustion happens when your body gets too hot. It can be caused by exercise or hot weather. You may feel weak, dizzy or worried. You also may have a headache or a fast heartbeat. You may get dehydrated and have very little urine.

### What should I do if I think I have heat exhaustion?

If you think you have heat exhaustion, get out of the heat quickly. Rest in a cool, shady place. Drink plenty of water or other fluids. Do NOT drink alcohol. Alcohol can make heat exhaustion worse. If you do not feel better within 30 minutes, you should contact your doctor. If heat exhaustion is not treated, it can progress to heatstroke.

### How can I prevent heat illness?

When the heat index (the measurement of how it feels when relative humidity is combined with the effects of the air temperature) is high, stay indoors in air-conditioned areas when possible. If you must go outside, take the following precautions:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat or using an umbrella.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or more.
- Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity. Drink extra water all day. Drink fewer beverages that contain caffeine (such as tea, coffee and cola) or alcohol.
- Schedule vigorous outdoor activities for cooler times of the day—before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
- During an outdoor activity, take frequent breaks. Drink water or other fluids every 15 to 20 minutes, even if you don't feel thirsty. If you have clear, pale urine, you are probably drinking enough fluids.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about how to deal with the heat, about drinking extra fluids and about your medicines.

### What should I do after having heat exhaustion?

Having heat exhaustion makes you more sensitive to hot conditions for about a week afterwards. Be especially careful not to exercise too hard, and avoid hot weather. Ask your doctor to tell you when it is safe to return to your normal activities.

### Source

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