



Are You Ready?

# EXTREME HEAT

*A Fact Sheet for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing*



*Extreme heat kills by pushing the human body beyond its limits. Most heat disorders happen because the victim has been overexposed to heat or has over-exercised for his or her age and physical condition. Older adults, young children, and those who are sick or overweight are more likely to give way to extreme heat.*

## Plan ahead

- Install window air conditioners tightly; insulate if necessary.
- Check air-conditioning ducts for proper insulation.
- Install temporary window reflectors (for use between windows and drapes), such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Weather-strip doors and sills to keep cool air in.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, awnings, or louvers. (Outdoor awnings or louvers can reduce the heat that enters a home by up to 80 percent.)
- Keep storm windows up all year.

## During a heat emergency

- Stay indoors as much as possible and limit exposure to the sun.
- Stay on the lowest floor out of the sunshine if air conditioning is not available.
- Consider spending the warmest part of the day in public buildings such as libraries, schools, movie theaters, shopping malls, and other community facilities.
- Eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals. Avoid using salt unless directed to do so by a physician.
- Drink plenty of water. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney, or liver disease, and are on fluid-restricted diets or have a problem with fluid retention should consult a doctor before increasing liquid intake.
- Limit intake of alcoholic beverages.
- Dress in loose-fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothes that cover as much skin as possible.
- Protect face and head by wearing a wide-brimmed hat.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors who do not have air conditioning and/or live alone.
- Never leave children or pets alone in vehicles.
- Avoid tiring work during the warmest part of the day. Use a buddy system and take many breaks.

## Heat-related terms

Familiarize yourself with these terms to help identify an extreme heat hazard.

- **Heat wave:** Prolonged period of excessive heat, often combined with excessive humidity.
- **Heat index:** A number in degrees Fahrenheit (F) that tells how hot it feels when relative humidity is added to the air temperature. Exposure to full sunshine can increase the heat index by 15 degrees.
- **Heat cramps:** Muscle pains and spasms due to heavy effort. Although heat cramps are the least severe of symptoms, they are often the first signal that the body is having trouble with the heat.
- **Heat exhaustion:** Normally happens when people exercise heavily or work in a hot, humid place where body fluids are lost through heavy sweating. Blood flow to the skin increases, causing blood flow to decrease to the vital organs. This results in a form of mild shock. If not treated, the victim's condition will worsen. Body temperature will keep rising and the victim may suffer heat stroke.
- **Heat stroke or sun stroke:** A life-threatening condition. The victim's temperature control system, which produces sweating to cool the body, stops working. The body temperature can rise so high that brain damage and death may result if the body is not cooled quickly.

*Information adapted from materials by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)).*

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Conditions	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Skin redness and pain, possible swelling, blisters, fever, headaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a shower using soap to remove oils that may block pores, preventing the body from cooling naturally.</li> <li>Apply dry, sterile dressings to any blisters, and get medical attention.</li> </ul>
Heat cramps	Painful spasms, usually in leg and abdominal muscles; heavy sweating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get the victim to a cooler location.</li> <li>Lightly stretch and gently massage affected muscles to relieve spasms.</li> <li>Give sips of up to a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. (Do not give liquids with caffeine or alcohol.)</li> <li>Discontinue liquids if victim is nauseated.</li> </ul>
Heat exhaustion	Heavy sweating but skin may be cool, pale, or flushed. Weak pulse. Normal body temperature is possible, but temperature will likely rise. Fainting or dizziness, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, and headaches are possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get victim to lie down in a cool place.</li> <li>Loosen or remove clothing.</li> <li>Apply cool, wet washcloths to skin.</li> <li>Fan or move victim to air-conditioned place.</li> <li>Give sips of water if victim is conscious.</li> <li>Be sure water is consumed slowly.</li> <li>Give half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.</li> <li>Discontinue water if victim is nauseated.</li> <li>Seek immediate medical attention if vomiting occurs.</li> </ul>



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