

## Preventing Heat-Related Illness



**Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect away some of the sun's heat. Wear a hat or use an umbrella.

**Drink Water.** Carry water or juice with you and drink plenty of it, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dry out the body.

**Eat small meals** and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which increases your metabolic heat.

**Avoid using salt tablets** unless your doctor told you to take them.

**Slow down.** Avoid strenuous activity. If you must be active, do your activity in the coolest part of the day, usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m.

**Stay indoors as much as possible.**

**Take regular breaks** when active on a hot day. Take time out and find a cool place. If you or someone else is showing signs or a heat-related illness, stop the activity and find a cool place to rest.

*Remember – have fun, but stay cool.*

## Maryland Local Health Department

Allegany County	(301) 759-5000
Anne Arundel County	(410) 222-7095
Baltimore City	(410) 396-3100
Baltimore County	(410) 887-3740
Calvert County	(410) 535-5400
Caroline County	(410) 479-8030
Carroll County	(410) 857-5000
Cecil County	(410) 996-5550
Charles County	(301) 609-6900
Dorchester County	(410) 228-3223
Frederick County	(301) 600-1029
Garrett County	(301) 334-7777
Harford County	(410) 879-8322
Howard County	(410) 313-6300
Kent County	(410) 778-1350
Montgomery County	(240) 777-1000
Prince George's County	(301) 883-7879
Queen Anne's County	(410) 758-0720
St. Mary's County	(301) 475-4330
Somerset County	(443) 523-1700
Talbot County	(410) 819-5600
Washington County	(240) 313-3200
Wicomico County	(410) 749-1244
Worcester County	(410) 632-1100

**Maryland Department of Health  
And Mental Hygiene**  
*Center for Preventive Health Services*  
201 West Preston Street, Room 306  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2399  
(410) 767-5780

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# Heat Emergency Awareness

Summer is here again,  
and that means fun and  
activities under the sun!

Please remember that  
extreme heat and sunlight  
can make you sick, and may  
even endanger your life.

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**  
Martin O'Malley, *Governor*  
Anthony G. Brown, *Lt. Governor*  
John M. Colmers, MPH  
*Secretary, DHMH*

## Heat-Related Emergencies



Usually your body can cool itself by letting heat escape through the skin and by perspiration. When these fail, a person can become sick.

Anyone can be a victim of a heat-related illness, such as people working or exercising under the sun when it is hot. However, those most at risk are:



Children under five



People over age 65



People with chronic illnesses and disabilities



People taking certain medications

## Signs and Symptoms

**Heat Cramps** can happen because of loss of water and salt from heavy sweating. Heat cramps can cause muscle pains and spasms, but are not as serious as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

**Heat Exhaustion** and **Heat Stroke** are the two main heat-related illnesses that can become serious or deadly if not taken care of right away.

**Heat Exhaustion** symptoms include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness and exhaustion. Body temperature may be near normal.

**Heat Stroke** symptoms may include hot, red skin; fainting or passing out; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid and shallow breathing. Body temperature can be 105 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. If the person is sweating from heavy work or exercise, his or her skin may be wet; otherwise it will feel dry.

## First Aid Treatments for Heat Emergencies



**Heat Cramps:** Get the person to a cool place and have him or her rest comfortably. Lightly stretch the cramped muscle, and give the person a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not give liquids with alcohol or caffeine in them. They can make the condition worse.

**Heat Exhaustion:** Get the person out of the heat and to a cool place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as sheets or towels. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure he or she drinks slowly. Give a half glass of water every 15 minutes. Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine. Let the victim rest in a comfortable position, and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

**Heat Stroke** is a life threatening situation. Help is needed **FAST!** Call 911 or your local emergency number. Move the person to a cooler in a cool bath or wrap wet sheets around their body and fan them. Watch for signs of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body however you can. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting, or has fainted, do not give anything to eat or drink.

## Heat Alert Warnings

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) alerts the media and local health officials when the Heat Index is 105 degrees or higher. The Heat Index is a measure of temperature and humidity that tells how hot it actually feels.

Listen to the radio or the TV, or call your local health department to find out if a Heat Alert has been given. The phone numbers are listed on the back panel.



**Pay attention to family members, friends and neighbors. Make sure they are coping well With the heat, particularly if they Are elderly, young, or ill.**

*This brochure is for informational purposes and does not in any way override seeking medical attention for the conditions mentioned here.*