



Working In The Heat

Working in hot conditions, indoors or outdoors, may create health risks. It is important for the body to maintain a core body temperature close to 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. To achieve this, the body releases heat to the environment. The most important temperature regulating process is sweating. A person at rest and not under stress will sweat at a rate of approximately 1 liter per day. Under the stress of heavy work or high temperature the sweating rate may increase to as much as 4 liters in 4 hours.

The problem occurs when the body becomes dehydrated (lack of water) and the sweating process can not adequately release heat from the body. Dehydration is the prime cause of heat stress. A variety of heat disorders are covered by the term heat stress, which include heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

Heat Stress Indicators

Dehydration Levels	Symptoms	Response
Minor	Unnoticed	Drink water (At least 16 ounces)
Initial	Loss of endurance, thirsty, hot, less comfortable	Drink water (At least 16 ounces)
Performance loss	Loss of strength and energy, moderate discomfort	Drink water (At least 16 ounces)
Heat Cramps	Cramps, headache, extreme discomfort	Drink water (At least 16 ounces)
Heat Exhaustion	Nausea, fatigue, headaches, appear pale or flushed but skin is cool	Cool body, use wet compress, loosen clothing, drink water slowly
Heat Stroke	Collapse, unconsciousness, delirium, skin is dry and warm with high body temperature up to 106+	Call for medical assistance immediately, cool body, wet clothing or use wet compress, fan the body



Preventing Heat Stress

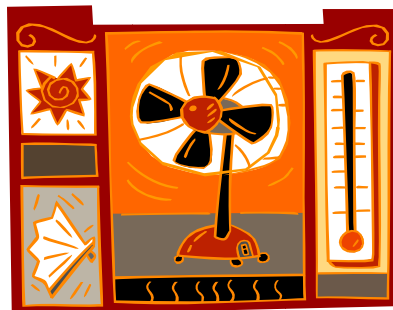
As you can see one of the keys to preventing heat stress is to stay hydrated by drinking water. Prepare to work in the heat by drinking 8 to 16 ounces of water before starting. Then drink 16 ounces of water per hour during work. By the time you notice you are thirsty you are already partially dehydrated.

Other Preventative Measures To Avoid Heat Stress

- Avoid alcohol, coffee, tea, or soda, which act as diuretics that further remove water.
- Eat well-balanced meals.



- Getting an adequate amount of sleep is important.
- Wear lightweight, evaporative type clothing, such as cotton. (Light colored clothing outside)
- Acclimatization to heat occurs naturally over a number of days, which allows the body to withstand considerably more heat.



Taking adequate precautions and preparing for the heat can help prevent heat stress. You can not go wrong with cooling people down.