

Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when the body cannot maintain a normal temperature due to high external temperatures, leading to various symptoms such as heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke - which is a medical emergency. See below for more information.



What are the Symptoms of Heat Stress?

Heat Rash: Red clusters of pimples or small blisters, usually on the neck, upper chest, groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases.

Heat Cramps: Muscle pains or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

Heat Exhaustion: Heavy sweating, weakness, cold, pale and clammy skin, fast and weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, and fainting.

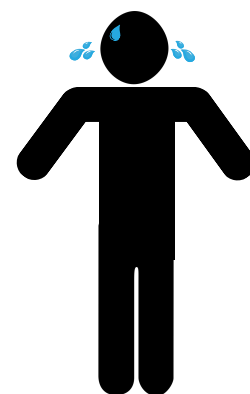
Heat Stroke: High body temperature (above 103°F), hot, red, dry or moist skin, rapid and strong pulse, and possible unconsciousness.

Fun FAQ!

Due to climate change in all global regions, the number of people exposed to extreme heat is growing exponentially.

Factors Contributing to Heat Stress


- Poor physical condition or underlying health conditions.
- Dehydration.
- Lack of acclimatization.
- High temperatures and humidity.
- Direct sun exposure or extreme heat.
- Heavy physical labor.



What Should You Do if Someone Shows Signs of Heat Stress?

Heat Rash: Keep the affected area dry and cool. Use powder to soothe the skin.

Heat Cramps: Stop all activity and sit in a cool place. Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.

 **TAKE TIME TO ACCLIMATIZE.**
Work shorter shifts until your body has adjusted to the heat.

 **STAY WELL HYDRATED.**
Drink often, before you get thirsty.

 **WATCH FOR SIGNS OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES.**
Designate a buddy and ask how they feel periodically.

 **TAKE TIME TO REST AND COOL DOWN**
Sit somewhere cool, rest, and rehydrate frequently.

How Can Heat Stress be Prevented?

Heat Exhaustion: Move the person to a cooler environment. Lay them down and loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths to as much of the body as possible. Offer sips of water. Seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than one hour.

Heat Stroke: Call 911 immediately. Move the person to a cooler environment and try to cool them with whatever methods are available until help arrives (e.g., cool bath, wet cloths, or ice packs).

By following these preventive measures and being aware of the symptoms, you can help ensure a safer work environment during hot weather conditions. Stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay safe!

Have more questions? Reach out to EH&S at Labsafety@columbia.edu or give us a call

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“Niosh Fast Facts: Protecting Yourself from Heat Stress.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 1, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-114/#print>.

“Heat Stress.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 31, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/default.html>.