



Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke Treatment

Self-Care at Home

Home care is appropriate for mild forms of heat exhaustion. Heat stroke is a medical emergency, and an ambulance should be called immediately.

- For mild cases of heat exhaustion
 - Rest in a cool shaded area.
 - Give cool fluids such as water or sports drinks (that will replace the salt that has been lost). Salty snacks are appropriate as tolerated.
 - Loosen or remove clothing.
 - Do not use an alcohol rub.
 - Do not give any beverages containing alcohol or caffeine.
- Heat stroke (do not attempt to treat a case of heat stroke at home, but you can help while waiting for medical assistance to arrive.)
 - Call 911 immediately
 - Move the person to a cooler environment, or place him or her in a cool bath of water (as long as he or she is conscious and can be attended continuously).
 - Alternatively, moisten the skin with lukewarm water and use a fan to blow cool air across the skin.
 - Give cool beverages by mouth only if the person has a normal mental state and can tolerate it.

Medical Treatment

The treatment is directed at cooling the patient in a controlled fashion while making sure that the patient stays hydrated and that their blood flow is normal.

- Treatment of heat exhaustion
 - Because heat exhaustion generally develops gradually, a person will often be dehydrated. Usually they may be given something to drink, and a cool sport beverage (with 6% or less glucose) should be used. IV fluid may be used if the person does not tolerate oral replacement (if he or she cannot keep anything down).
 - The patient should stay in a cool environment and avoid strenuous activity for several days.
- Treatment of heat stroke
 - Treatment is aimed at reducing the patient's core temperature to normal as quickly as possible.
 - The doctor may use immersion, evaporative, or invasive cooling techniques.
 - In the evaporative technique, cold or ice packs may be placed in the armpits or groin. The skin is kept moist with cool fluid, and fans are directed to blow across the body.
 - An IV will be started and fluids are given rapidly.
 - The patient's urine output will be monitored.
 - Treatment will continue until the patient's body core temperature is 101.3-102.2°F (38.5-39°C) and then stopped to keep from making the patient too cold.
 - The patient most likely be admitted to the hospital for further blood tests and observation.

more information from eMedicineHealth

- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
- [Exams and Tests](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Prevention](#)
- [Outlook](#)

For more information, read the complete article, Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke (<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=59290>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth

Reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD on August 13, 2007

Last updated: August 13, 2007

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a doctor.

© 2006 WebMD Inc. All rights reserved.