

Hot Weather Advice

The unusually warm weather recently experienced reminds us that more hot weather is likely on its way. In preparation for summer weather, the Bergen County Department of Health Services offers the following tips to prevent heat related illness. Remember, smart people keep cool heads during the summer months.

- [Drink plenty of fluids but avoid alcohol and caffeine. Eat light meals spread out over the day. Additional salt should be added only on the advice of your physician.](#)
- [Avoid strenuous activity or restrict it to cooler morning or evening hours.](#)
- [Cool off by spending some time in air conditioning, even if only a few hours each day.](#)
- [Wear loose, lightweight, light colored clothing and a wide brimmed hat when out of doors. Dress children accordingly. Limit exposure to direct sunlight and avoid sunburn.](#)
- [When energy demand is high due to extended periods of hot weather, conserve power by running air conditioners at a moderate temperature and turning them off when leaving home. Avoid use of non essential appliances such as ovens, dryers, etc.](#)
- [Never leave children and pets confined in a car. On an 85 degree day, the temperature inside a car, with the window slightly open, will reach 102 degrees in 10 minutes, 120 degrees in 30 minutes.](#)
- [Check on elderly family, friends and neighbors to assure their well-being. Because the elderly are particularly susceptible to the effects of heat, they or their caretakers should make a special effort to follow these guidelines. Children under five years of age, and especially under one year, are also sensitive to heat's effect. Be careful not to overdress them and give them plenty of fluids.](#)

Illnesses that can be caused by extreme temperatures include:

1. Heat stroke, or sunstroke, is a substantial rise in body temperature when the body is unable to rid itself of excess heat. The skin is very hot and dry, not sweaty. Heat stroke has a rapid onset with symptoms including dizziness, nausea, confusion, and often unconsciousness. In case of heat stroke, the person should be moved to a cool area and the body temperature lowered as quickly as possible by immersing in cool water or by pouring water over him or her. Seek medical attention immediately, as heat stroke can be fatal.
2. Heat exhaustion is a mild form of shock from excess exposure to heat and recognized by pale, clammy skin and profuse sweating. Body temperature remains close to normal but the victim may experience headache, dizziness, fatigue, and abdominal cramps. In the case of heat exhaustion, move the person to a cool area and as long as the individual is conscious, give cool water to drink. Seek medical attention as quickly as possible.

3. Heat syncope is a loss of consciousness because of decreased blood flow to the heart and brain, as the blood pools in the extremities. It is marked by a sudden loss of consciousness, quickly regained by lying down. Allow the victim to rest, then remove the person from the environment or activity which has caused the problem.
4. Heat rash, or prickly heat, is a rash caused by blocked sweat ducts and is usually accompanied by a tingling or prickling sensation where the rash appears. It is best to shower, or wash frequently, then change into dry clothing. Avoid exposure to heat until the rash is gone.
5. Heat cramps are painful muscle cramps resulting from profuse perspiration. Mild to severe cramps in arms, legs and/or abdomen are from working in a hot environment or from drinking iced drinks quickly or in too large quantities. The skin will be pale and moist with heavy sweating. Occasionally, nausea or faintness accompanies heat cramps. The victim should be moved to a cool area. Firm pressure on cramping muscles may relieve spasm.