

Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke

Why is This Important?

Heat exhaustion and heat stroke occur when the body **overheats due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures, dehydration, and excessive physical activity**. If untreated, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke, a **life-threatening emergency** requiring immediate medical attention.

Signs & Symptoms

Heat Exhaustion (Mild to Moderate - Needs Immediate Cooling)

- ✓ Heavy sweating
- ✓ Weakness or fatigue
- ✓ Dizziness or fainting
- ✓ Nausea or vomiting
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Muscle cramps
- ✓ Cool, pale, clammy skin
- ✓ Fast but weak pulse

Heat Stroke (Severe - Medical Emergency)

Confusion, dizziness, disorientation
Rapid heartbeat (strong pulse)
Body temperature above 103°F (39.5°C)
Red, hot, dry skin (no sweating)
Loss of consciousness or seizures

First Aid: What to Do

For Heat Exhaustion:

- ✓ **Move to a cool, shaded area**
- ✓ **Drink cool water or sports drinks** (avoid alcohol or caffeine)
- ✓ **Loosen tight clothing**
- ✓ **Apply cool, wet cloths or take a cool shower**
- ✓ **Rest until fully recovered**

For Heat Stroke (Call 911 Immediately!)

- ✓ **Move the person to a cool area**
- ✓ **Cool the body with ice packs (neck, armpits, groin)**
- ✓ **Spray or sponge with cool water and fan the body**
- ✓ **If alert, give small sips of water**
- ✓ **Do NOT give fluids if unconscious**

Prevention Tips

- ✓ **Stay Hydrated** - Drink **8-10 glasses of water daily**, more if sweating.
- ✓ **Avoid Midday Heat** - Stay indoors from **10 AM - 4 PM**, the hottest hours.
- ✓ **Wear Loose, Light Clothing** - Light-colored, breathable fabrics help cool the body.
- ✓ **Use Sunscreen & Shade** - Prevent burns that reduce the body's ability to cool itself.
- ✓ **Take Frequent Breaks** - If working or exercising in the heat, rest in the shade every **30-60 minutes**.
- ✓ **Know Your Risk** - Children, elderly, pregnant individuals, and those with medical conditions are more vulnerable.

When to Seek Medical Help

Confusion, fainting, or seizures

Body temperature above 103°F (39.5°C)

Rapid heartbeat or difficulty breathing

No sweating, hot dry skin

Bottom Line

- ✓ **Recognize early signs of heat exhaustion and act quickly.**
- ✓ **Stay hydrated and cool in hot weather.**
- ✓ **Heat stroke is a medical emergency-Call 911 immediately.**

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.