

# Safety tips on how to handle the heat

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SPRINGFIELD – With high temperatures expected over the next couple of days, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. is urging Illinoisans to take preventive actions to avoid heat-related illness like heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

“It’s important for people to recognize the signs of heat-related illness and take action to prevent becoming sick,” said Director Shah. “Normally, the body cools itself by sweating. However, if temperatures and humidity are extremely high, sweating is not effective in maintaining the body’s normal temperature. If the body does not cool properly or does not cool enough, a person may suffer a heat-related illness, which can become serious or even deadly if unattended.”

An easy to read chart of heat-related illnesses, what to look for, and what to do is below.

Heat-related death or illnesses are preventable if you follow a few simple steps.

- Stay in an air-conditioned area during the hottest hours of the day. If you don't have air conditioning in your home, go to a public place such as a shopping mall or a library to stay cool. Cooling stations and senior centers are also available in many large cities for people of all ages. <http://www.illinois.gov/KeepCool/SitePages/CoolingCenters.aspx>.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Drink water often. Don't wait until you are thirsty.
- Avoid unnecessary hard work or activities if you are outside or in a building without air-conditioning.
- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure. When in the sun, wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim.

Air conditioning is the strongest protective factor against heat-related illness. Exposure to air conditioning for even a few hours a day will reduce the risk for heat-related illness.

Never leave anyone, including pets, alone in a closed, parked vehicle. The air temperature inside a car rises rapidly during hot weather and can lead to brain damage or death.

Visit [www.dph.illinois.gov](http://www.dph.illinois.gov) for [heat related information](#).

Heat-related illness	What to look for	What to do
Heat stroke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Body temperature 103°F or higher</li> <li>- Hot, red, dry or damp skin</li> <li>- Fast, strong pulse</li> <li>- Headache</li> <li>- Feeling dizzy</li> <li>- Nausea</li> <li>- Feeling confused</li> <li>- Passing out</li> </ul>	<p><b>Call 9-1-1 right away. Heat stroke is a medical emergency.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move the person to a cooler place</li> <li>- Lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath</li> <li>- Do NOT give the person anything to drink</li> </ul>
Heat exhaustion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heavy sweating</li> <li>- Cold, pale, and clammy skin</li> <li>- Fast, weak pulse</li> <li>- Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>- Muscle cramps</li> <li>- Feeling tired or weak</li> <li>- Feeling dizzy</li> <li>- Headache</li> <li>- Passing out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move to a cool place</li> <li>- Loosen clothing</li> <li>- Use cool, wet cloths or take a cool bath</li> <li>- Sip water</li> </ul> <p><b>GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are throwing up</li> <li>- Symptoms get worse</li> <li>- Symptoms last longer than an hour</li> </ul>

Heat cramps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heavy sweating during intense exercise</li> <li>- Muscle pain or spasms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stop physical activity and move to a cool place</li> <li>- Drink water or a sports drink</li> <li>- Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity</li> </ul> <p>GET MEDICAL HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cramps last longer than an hour</li> <li>- You're on a low-sodium diet</li> <li>- You have heart problems</li> </ul>
Heat rash	Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stay in a cool, dry place</li> <li>- Keep the rash dry</li> <li>- Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash</li> </ul>
Sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Painful, red, and warm skin</li> <li>- Blisters on the skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals</li> <li>- Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath</li> <li>- Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas</li> <li>- Do NOT break blisters</li> </ul>

