

Fact Sheet

Heat Illness Prevention

What is Heat Illness?

Heat illness is a medical condition resulting from the body's inability to cope with heat exposure. Types of heat illness include heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. CSUDH's heat illness prevention procedures, including provision of water, rest and shade, go into effect when the temperature exceeds 80° F. High heat procedures shall be implemented at 95° F for employees working outdoors such as Grounds.

How does the body respond to heat?

The body tries to maintain a constant internal temperature of 98.6° F by getting rid of excess heat. When the body becomes overloaded, the following conditions could occur:

- **Increased blood flow to the skin:** This reduces blood flow to the brain and muscles, which can decrease mental alertness and comprehension, and decrease muscle strength and endurance.
- **Sweating:** Sweating results in loss of body fluid and sodium and can lead to dehydration.

Factors that contribute to heat illness

- **Environmental:** High air temperature, poor air circulation, high humidity and radiant heat sources
- **Physical:** Repetitive, physically demanding work of long duration, dark/heavy weight clothing with poor breathability
- **Personal:** Poor fitness level, excessive weight, drug or alcohol use, and history of prior heat-related illness



- ✓ Give your body time to adjust to the heat: most workers require 4-14 days to acclimatize
- ✓ Wear light colors and choose lightweight/breathable fabrics
- ✓ Drink up to 4 cups of water per hour
- ✓ Do not consume caffeine or alcohol
- ✓ Try to perform your most strenuous activities in the early morning
- ✓ Use work/rest cycles when possible to give your body time to recover
- ✓ Monitor weather reports using a heat index meter or checking the [National Weather Service Forecast Office](#) website

Types of Heat Illness Disorders

Condition	Symptoms	Treatment
Heat Rash	Itching/irritation of the skin from clogged sweat glands	Keep affected area dry, and apply powder if necessary to absorb moisture
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms in arms, legs, abdomen; hot, moist skin	Drink fluids, massage cramped areas, rest in shade. If condition does improve after 1 hour seek medical attention
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating, pale/cool skin, rapid pulse, fatigue, increased thirst, headache, blurred vision, fainting	Move to a cool, shaded area, rest with legs elevated, loosen clothing, drink plenty of fluids
Heat Stroke	Very high body temp, lack of sweating, hot, red and dry skin, headache, dizziness, weakness, rapid pulse	Call 911 or university police at (310) 243-3333 Stay with person and help them to shade If conscious and responsive, provide drinking water Remove layers of clothing and apply wet cool towels or wet their clothes down Use a fan or other cooling device directly to the person