

Keeping Cool During Exercise



Many of us relish the intense, energizing feeling that comes with exercise, but we fail to think about the dangers of overheating, particularly during high-intensity exercises. While it is normal and natural for body temperature to rise when we work out, exercise requires basic attention to safety and good practice.

Overheating—also known as **hyperthermia**, **heat exhaustion** or **heat stroke**—is most likely to occur during very strenuous exercise or when a person exercises in extremely hot weather. Symptoms of hyperthermia, such as **headache**, **nausea**, **exhaustion** and **dizziness**, can range from mild to severe.

A person with heat exhaustion might also run a temperature above 103° F, even though he or she may describe feeling cold. If this occurs, seek immediate medical attention because the condition is life threatening. For milder forms of overheating, taking a cool bath, sponge bath or shower; resting in a cool area; and drinking sufficient fluids can bring down the person's body temperature and get him or her back to feeling normal.

The following precautions can help avoid heat problems during exercise:

- **wear lightweight clothing**, especially if it is hot and humid outside;
- **avoid running or other forms of intense exercise under full sun**, particularly during midday hours;
- **exercise in the cooler evening hours**;
- **take regular breaks and drink plenty of fluids**;
- **avoid caffeinated and alcoholic drinks**;
- **drink an electrolyte beverage**; and
- **do not push yourself too hard.**

Of course, your best defense against heat-related illness is prevention. Talk to us about an exercise routine that will keep you hydrated and cool while still allowing you to reach your health goals.