What is heat stroke?

Heat stroke is a condition that happens when a person’s body gets too hot. Most often, heat stroke occurs when people exercise in very hot and humid weather without drinking enough fluids, but heat stroke can happen in people that are not exercising too. It is especially likely to affect older people and those who have health problems, so they should be extra careful in hot conditions.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency that needs to be treated quickly because it can lead to death if it is not treated fast enough.

When people get too hot, they can also get “heat exhaustion.” This condition is not as serious as heat stroke, but can lead to heat stroke if not treated.

What are the symptoms of heat stroke?

**Serious symptoms:**
- A body temperature of 104°F (40°C) or higher
- Confusion or trouble thinking clearly
- Seeing or hearing things that aren’t real (“hallucinating”)
- Seizures
- Passing out
- Skin redness and warmth
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Muscle cramps or weakness
- Headaches

**How to treat minor symptoms:**
- Spray yourself with cool water and then sit in front of a fan.
- Move into the shade, or go into an air-conditioned building or car.
- Take a cool shower or bath.
- Drink water or a sports drink. Do NOT have a drink with alcohol or caffeine.
- Take off any extra clothing you are wearing.
- Put a cold pack or cool cloth on your neck or armpit.

How can heat stroke be prevented?

- Try not to be too active, and take breaks when you exercise.
- Drink enough fluids, such as water or sports drinks, so you do not feel thirsty. Don’t force yourself to drink very large amounts in a short time though, and don’t drink so much that you feel uncomfortable. This can be harmful.
- Do any exercise early in the day, or before it gets too hot out.
- Wear loose, light-weight clothes; don’t wear too many layers.
- Avoid being in a hot car.

What’s Going Around?

Heat Stroke

Summer is here, time to keep cool. We have heard of heat stroke, but what exactly is heat stroke?

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