

## **Summer Concerns - Recognizing heat exhaustion**

Most CHC members know enough about sunburn and dehydration to avoid serious problems. We also use the terms "heat exhaustion" and "heat stroke", but what do they actually mean? Are they the same thing?

Heat exhaustion is a heat-related illness that can occur after exposure to high temperatures and is often accompanied by dehydration. Symptoms can include headache, pale and clammy skin, heavy sweating, nausea, tiredness, dizziness or fainting, and muscle cramps. Treat heat exhaustion by re-hydrating and cooling: Move the affected hiker into shade, and cool with water, wet cloths, and fanning. Although heat exhaustion isn't as serious as heat stroke, it isn't something to be taken lightly.

Without proper intervention, heat exhaustion can progress to heat stroke, which can damage the brain and other vital organs, and even cause death. Heat stroke requires swift action. It occurs when the body's core temperature reaches 105o F or higher, the temperature at which damage and death can occur. The symptoms to look for are increased heart rate or rapid pulse, dehydration, hot, sweaty, red skin, and confusion and disorientation. In case of heat stroke, try to get medical help immediately. Cool the stricken hiker as much as possible -- move into shade, loosen tight clothing, splash with cool water, apply wet cloths, and fan. Have the hiker drink cool water.

The best way to beat heat problems before they occur is to recognize that "it's too hot". Slow down, seek shade, rest often, drink water, and replace salts.

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