

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are painful, involuntary muscle spasms that usually occur during heavy exercise in hot environments. The spasms may be more intense and more prolonged than are typical nighttime leg cramps. Fluid and electrolyte loss often contribute to heat cramps. Muscles most often affected include those of your calves, arms, abdominal wall and back, although heat cramps may involve any muscle group involved in exercise.

If you suspect heat cramps:

- Rest briefly and cool down
- Drink clear juice or an electrolyte-containing sports drink
- Practice gentle, range-of-motion stretching and gentle massage of the affected muscle group
- Don't resume strenuous activity for several hours or longer after heat cramps go away
- Call your doctor if your cramps don't go away within one hour or so

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a condition whose symptoms may include

heavy sweating and a rapid pulse, a result of your body overheating. Causes of heat exhaustion include exposure to high temperatures, particularly when combined with high humidity, and strenuous physical activity. Without prompt treatment, heat exhaustion can lead to heatstroke, a life-threatening condition. [L] [SEP]

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Cool, moist skin with goose bumps when in the heat
- Heavy sweating
- Faintness
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Weak, rapid pulse
- Low blood pressure upon standing
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea
- Headache

If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- Stop all activity and rest
- Move to a cooler place
- Drink cool water or sports drinks

If you are with someone showing signs of heat exhaustion, seek immediate medical attention if he or she becomes confused or agitated, loses consciousness, or is unable to drink. You will need immediate cooling and urgent medical attention if your core body temperature or higher.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke is a condition caused by your body overheating, usually as a result of prolonged exposure to or physical exertion in high temperatures. This can occur if your body temperature rises to 104 F (40 C) or higher.

Heatstroke requires emergency treatment. Untreated heatstroke can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys and muscles.

Symptoms of heatstroke include:

- High body temperature.
- Altered mental state or behavior. Confusion, agitation, slurred speech, irritability, delirium, seizures and coma can all result from heatstroke.
- Alteration in sweating. In heatstroke brought on by hot weather, your skin will feel hot and dry to the touch.

However, in heatstroke brought on by strenuous exercise, your skin may feel dry or slightly moist.

- Nausea and vomiting.
- Flushed skin.
- Rapid breathing.
- Racing heart rate.
- Headache.

If you suspect heat exhaustion:

- Get the person into shade or indoors.
- Remove excess clothing.
- Cool the person with whatever means available — put in a cool tub of water or a cool shower, spray with a garden hose, sponge with cool water, fan while misting with cool water, or place ice packs or cold, wet towels on the person's head, neck, armpits and groin.