### Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stress

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stress</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>Excessive thirst and sweating: These are the first signs of heat stress.</td>
<td>Follow your natural desire of frequently drinking plentiful of water.</td>
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<td>High body temperature: A body temperature of 104°F or higher is one of the main symptoms of heatstroke.</td>
<td>Try to lower the person's body temperature as soon as possible. For this, help the person lie down near a fan or an air-cooler; place a wet towel or a wet-cloth dipped in cold water over the person, or place ice-packs over the body, or sponge the person with the coolest available water.</td>
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<td>Do not cover the affected person with any blanket</td>
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<td>Muscle cramps due to loss of salt from body: This mainly occurs in those who are working hard outdoors.</td>
<td>Consume plentiful of salted buttermilk, rice-water, lime juice, dal-pani, aam panna, etc. ORS (Oral rehydration salts solution) is also useful.</td>
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<td>Do not consume glucose</td>
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<td>Dizziness and fainting</td>
<td>The affected person should be shifted to a cool place. Help the person lie down by placing his head lower than the rest of the body. This position increases blood flow to the brain.</td>
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<td>Do not place a pillow below the head and also do not place the person's head on someone's lap</td>
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<td>Heat stroke: When the heat-stress progresses, the pulse and breathing can become faster and weaker. The affected person may pass very little urine and that too of a dark colour. In some cases headache, nausea and vomiting might also occur. Slowly, the person becomes lethargic, drowsy, starts talking incoherently. He/she may not prefer to drink water even if given. Skin may become dry and pale. There might be no sweating and the person can run a very high fever.</td>
<td>This is a serious condition and requires immediate attention. Make arrangements to shift the person to a hospital. Meanwhile, continue to place ice packs over the body to rapidly cool the body; place a wet towel or a wet-cloth dipped in cold water over the person, or place ice-packs over the body, or sponge the person with the coolest available water.</td>
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How to protect oneself from the heat?

I. Do not exert yourself in the sun as far as possible. In case you have to work outdoors, follow the precautions listed below:

a) Consume plentiful of water and other fluids.

1. Drink a glass of water or more every hour. Other fluids such as lime water, buttermilk, coconut water, and aam panna can also help. However, avoid consumption of too much sugar.

2. Avoid coffee, tea and alcohol, glucose and other sweet drinks as they increase the rate of dehydration.

b) Following proper clothing habits:

1. Wear loose and light coloured clothes made from light fabrics like cotton, etc.

2. Cover your head and your face with cloth or cap, even while travelling on a motorbike.

c) Wisely decide your outdoor working hours:

1. Try to begin work in the early morning and continue till around 10-11am.

2. Take a break from work during the hottest part of the day (from about 11 am to 4 pm). You can continue later in the evening after 5 pm.

3. Try to stay in the shade whenever and wherever possible.

4. If you have to work under the direct sun, take rest from time to time in the shaded areas.

5. Create temporary shelters in work areas where trees are not available like at Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) sites, construction sites for roads and buildings etc.

6. If you have to travel outdoors during daytime, use an umbrella to protect yourself from direct sun.
d) **Follow proper travelling habits:**

1. Avoid travelling on the motorbike for long distances, particularly between 11am and 4pm. When you are on the motorbike: Ensure that you use a helmet.

2. Drink water frequently while travelling.

3. Avoid travelling with children, particularly infants, for long distances. They tend to remain silent while suffering from heat stress and heat stroke.


**II. Know who is susceptible to heat stress.**

1. Elderly people and children (particularly infants) are largely susceptible. Extra care should be taken to ensure their comfort and well-being.

2. Workers and labourers who work in open spaces are directly affected by sun.

3. Pregnant and breast feeding mothers, particularly if they are working outdoors or even in a kitchen, needs special care.

**III. Take appropriate action at home.**

1. If you feel extremely hot in your home, then try to rest under a tree during the afternoon.

2. Keep the windows of your home open when the indoors becomes too hot. Using fans can also help.

3. Always drink water frequently even when indoors.

*If someone develops symptoms such as vomiting, fainting, or high fever take the person to a health centre immediately.*