

health awareness



CTSI

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HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

As temperatures soar, the risk of heat-related illness increases. These illnesses are caused when the body's cooling mechanisms (i.e., sweating, radiating heat, etc...) are unable to lower the body's core temperature, usually as the result of physical activity and/or high temperatures. People with pre-existing medical conditions, the elderly, and young children are most at risk for heat-related illnesses. There are three heat-related syndromes: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.

Heat Cramps

Heat cramps are the mildest of the heat-related syndromes. While the exact cause of heat cramps are unknown, doctors believe that an electrolyte imbalance brought on by heavy sweating is most likely to blame. As we sweat, our bodies lose sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium. The loss of these

nutrients can result in chemical changes in body tissue.

Heat cramps are characterized by painful, involuntary, muscle spasms. Calves, thighs, or shoulders are the muscles most likely to be effected. Heat cramps often go away on their own after resting and restoring the body's electrolyte balance. However, if the cramps do not go away and you are unable to drink electrolyte-rich fluids because of nausea or vomiting, contact a doctor. IV rehydration with normal saline may be necessary. Heat cramps may occur in conjunction with heat exhaustion.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is caused when your body is unable to cool itself, usually as a result of exertion during high heat. While not as serious as heatstroke, heat exhaustion symptoms should not be ignored.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Confusion
- Dark-colored urine
- Dizziness
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Pale skin
- Profuse sweating
- Rapid heartbeat

Immediately treating heat exhaustion by drinking plenty of fluids, removing unnecessary clothing, taking a cool shower or bath, or applying other cooling methods (e.g., ice towels, fans, etc...) can prevent the exhaustion from becoming more serious.

Heatstroke

Heatstroke occurs when the body overheats reaching temperatures

(Article is continued on reverse side.)

above 104°F. It is a serious condition that can cause brain damage, internal organ damage, and death. Heatstroke requires immediate medical attention. The longer treatment is delayed the greater the risk of serious complications, so it is important to know and recognize heatstroke symptoms.

Symptoms of Heatstroke

- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness and light-headedness
- Lack of sweating
- Red, hot, dry skin
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Nausea and vomiting

- Rapid heartbeat, either strong or weak
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Behavioral changes (e.g., confusion, disorientation, staggering, etc...)
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

Heatstroke is usually preceded by heat cramps and heat exhaustion. These milder forms of heat-related illnesses can serve as a warning sign to seek treatment before the onset of heatstroke. However, heatstroke can occur without prior symptoms.

Avoiding Heat-related illnesses

The Mayo clinic recommends people take the following precautions:

- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light colored clothing
- Avoid sunburn
- Seek cooler places
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid hot spots (i.e., parked cars)
- Let your body acclimate to heat

If possible, avoid strenuous activity during high heat. If you must work in those conditions, take frequent breaks and stay hydrated. [CTSI](#)

Benefits Corner

Preventive Screenings & Care

Screenings and other services are considered and covered as preventive care for adults and children, even if the patient has no current symptoms or prior history of a medical condition associated with that screening or service. Treatment for a condition with current symptoms or for a previously diagnosed medical condition are not considered preventive care, instead they are covered under physician office services or diagnostic services benefits.

Many preventive care services when provided by participating providers are covered by this plan document with no deductible, copayment, or coinsurance. That means that we pay participating providers 100% of the maximum allowed amount. To determine which preventive services are covered, the U.S. Preventive Service Task Force (USPSTF) has developed recommendations based on scientific data. The USPSTF gives services it recommends as highly beneficial or highly-to-moderately beneficial an A or B grade. Examples of these services include:

- Breast cancer screenings
- Cervical cancer screenings
- Colorectal cancer screenings
- High Blood Pressure tests
- Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus tests
- Cholesterol tests
- Child and Adult Obesity screenings



For more details on the specific benefits that are covered, go to www.ctsi.org and click under CHP, click on Documents and access the CHP Plan Documents or contact your CHP Benefit Administrator at 303-861-0507.