



# Combating *Heat-Related* Illness

JOAG Tip of the Month

July 2018

**IT'S HOT OUTSIDE!**  
STAY COOL. STAY HYDRATED. STAY INFORMED.

Heat-related illness is a spectrum of disorders caused by prolonged or intense exposure to hot temperatures or humidity without relief or adequate fluid intake. This happens when the body loses the ability to properly cool itself, causing damage to the brain and vital organs. However, heat-related illnesses are preventable.

## Forms of Heat-Related Illness

**Heat Stroke:** The body becomes unable to control its temperature. Body temperature may rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes.

**Heat Exhaustion:** Milder form of heat-related illness. Can occur days after heat exposure.

**Heat Cramps:** Muscle pains or spasms – usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

**Heat Rash:** Skin irritation caused by excessive sweating during hot, humid weather.

**Sun Burn:** Red, painful skin that feels hot to the touch.

**Dehydration:** A person uses or loses more fluid than taken in.

### Increased Risk Factors

Age (*infants, young children and > 65 years old*), certain illnesses (*heart & lung diseases*), exertion or sudden exposure to hot weather, lack of air conditioning, being overweight and certain medications.

## Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses

- Apply sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going outside
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Understand your medical risks and be cautious
- Know your fitness level
- Replace salt and minerals
- Avoid sugary or alcoholic drinks
- Wear sunglasses when outdoors
- Wear appropriate clothing
- Stay cool indoors
- Avoid sun tanning and tanning beds
- Be aware of medications that increase your risk (e.g., *beta-blockers, vasoconstrictors, diuretics, antidepressants and antipsychotics*)
- Check your local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips
- Exercise in the morning or evening, when it is likely to be cooler outdoors
- Never leave anyone (including pets) in a parked car in warm or hot weather
- Plan rest periods during outdoor activities
- Keep your pets hydrated

REFERENCES: Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat-Related Illness accessed on 06/02/18 at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/warning.html> | Tips for Preventing Heat-related Illness accessed on 06/03/18 at <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.html> | Dehydration accessed 06/03/18 at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dehydration/symptoms-causes/syc-20354086> | Heat Stroke accessed on 06/02/18 at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heat-stroke/symptoms-causes/syc-20353581> | Heat Exhaustion accessed on 06/02/18 at <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heat-exhaustion/symptoms-causes/syc-20373250>