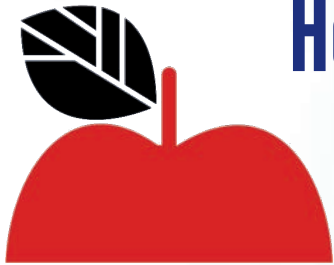


AUGUST 2024

BEAT THE HEAT



How heat affects our health

BY HEALTH FOR ALL

PREVENT HEAT ILLNESS

Outdoor and indoor heat exposure can be dangerous.

ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND HEAT

Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) can lead to dehydration or make it hard for people to properly cool their bodies.

DEHYDRATION

Know the signs and what to do to prevent it.

HEAT RASH VS SUN POISONING

Knowing the difference can help you identify the most appropriate treatment and prevention methods.

COMMON MEDICATIONS THAT COULD MAKE YOU VULNERABLE TO HEAT STROKE

Some medications can cause new side effects when you take them and are exposed to extreme heat.





Prevent Heat Illness at Work

Ways to Protect Yourself and Others

Ease into Work. Nearly 3 out of 4 fatalities from heat illness happen during the first week of work.

- New and returning workers need to build tolerance to heat (acclimatize) and take frequent breaks.
- Follow the 20% Rule. On the first day, work no more than 20% of the shift's duration at full intensity in the heat. Increase the duration of time at full intensity by no more than 20% a day until workers are used to working in the heat.

Do these simple things to prevent heat illness:

- Even if you are not thirsty, drink cool water — at least 1 cup every 20 minutes.
- Take rest breaks. Given the temperature, humidity, and conditions, take enough time to recover from the heat.
- Find shade or a cool area. Take breaks in a designated shady or cool location.
- Dress for the heat. Wear a hat and light-colored, loose-fitting, and breathable clothing if possible.
- Watch out for each other. Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat illness.
- If Wearing a face covering, change your face covering if it gets wet or soiled. Verbally check on others frequently.

FIRST AID FOR HEAT ILLNESS

Signs of a medical emergency:

- Abnormal thinking or behavior
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness

What to do:

1. Call 911 immediately
2. Cool the person down right away with ice or water
3. Stay with the person until help arrives



If someone experiences the following:

- Headache or nausea
- Weakness or dizziness
- Heavy sweating or hot, dry skin
- Elevated body temperature
- Thirst
- Decreased urine output

What to do:

- Give water to drink
- Remove unnecessary clothing
- Move to a cooler area
- Cool with water, ice, or a fan
- Do not leave alone
- Seek medical care if needed

Heat and Antidepressants

With soaring temperatures this summer, individuals taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)—commonly prescribed for depression—should exercise extra caution.

Dr. Dickey, our Health For All Medical Director, is advising patients to stay hydrated and be mindful of the risks.

According to Dr. Robert Glatter, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine at Zucker School of Medicine, SSRIs can heighten heat sensitivity, leading to an increased risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Here's what to know about the link between SSRIs and heat-related illnesses.

SSRIs can cause excessive sweating, which raises the risk of dehydration, especially in hot and humid environments.

Research suggests that about 10% of antidepressant users may experience excessive sweating.

Additionally, SSRIs may affect the hypothalamus, the brain region that regulates body temperature, making it harder for the body to adjust to heat or cold.



Heat Stroke

OTHER MEDICATIONS AND HEAT RELATED ILLNESSES

Other medications, like SSRIs, tricyclic antidepressants, benzodiazepines, antihistamines, beta-blockers, and diuretics, can also affect the body's ability to manage heat.

While SSRIs may slightly increase the risk of heat-related issues, they are generally safe, as emphasized by Dr. Adam Blumenberg. It's important, however, to remain mindful of the potential risks and how they can lead to dehydration by impairing the body's cooling mechanisms or increasing sweating.

Medications That Increase Sun Sensitivity

Medications that can increase sun sensitivity include the following:

- Some antibiotics
- Some antifungal medications

Antibiotics that can create uncomfortable side effects in the sun include Metrogel (metronidazole), which is used to treat infections of the gastrointestinal tract, heart, reproductive system, joints, skin, blood, lungs, and more.

Tetracycline is an antibiotic medication used to treat pneumonia and some other respiratory tract infections, as well as infections caused by ticks, lice, and more.

Antifungal medications that can cause side effects in the sun include Ancobon (flucytosine) and Grifulvin V (griseofulvin), which are used to treat athlete's foot, ringworm, and other infections caused by candida and cryptococcus fungi.

When you use these medications and spend time in the sun, you may develop a rash similar to sunburn.



Signs of Dehydration

If you feel like this summer is hotter than ever, you're not imagining it. Average air temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere reached all-time highs in mid-July 2024, according to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data.

The summer is not over yet, and with more high temperatures to come, it is vitally important to stay hydrated.

Dehydration occurs when you lose more fluid than you take in, depriving your body of the water and salts that it needs to function properly. Many things can lead to dehydration—like a nasty stomach bug or illness—but you're more likely to become dehydrated when you spend time outside in the heat.

A good rule of thumb is to take breaks for water and shade every 20 to 30 minutes, especially when the air temperature is above 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

Here are some key signs to know.

- Dry mouth
- Dry skin
- Extreme thirst
- Less frequent urination
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Confusion
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Fainting
- Rapid heart rate (palpitations)

IF YOU CATCH DEHYDRATION EARLY ENOUGH, DRINKING WATER OR AN ELECTROLYTE BEVERAGE SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO REHYDRATE YOU.



Heat Rash vs Sun Poisoning

While heat rash and sun poisoning are both heat—and sun-related skin problems, they have distinct causes and characteristics. Knowing the difference can help you identify which you have and determine the most appropriate treatment and prevention methods.



Heat Rash

Appearance

Small red or purple bumps or pimple-like blisters

Location

Develops in areas prone to friction and collecting sweat, such as the neck, chest, groin, back, and armpits

Onset

Develops within a few hours after sweating in hot and humid conditions

Other Symptoms

Itchiness or stinging sensations

Sun Poisoning

Appearance

Red, blistering, and peeling skin

Location

Affects any sun-exposed skin area (e.g., ears, face, shoulders, legs)

Onset

Appears within several hours up to 24 hours after prolonged sun exposure

Other Symptoms

Intense pain, fever, nausea, and chills

Treating Heat Rash

Heat rash treatment involves limiting exposure to heat and humidity and keeping your skin cool and dry. Most cases of heat rash clear up within three days with self-care measures, such as:

- Applying calamine lotion to soothe an itchy rash
- Applying cool compresses (e.g. damp, wet washcloth or ice pack covered in a towel) to the affected area
- Avoiding moisturizers or lotions on the affected area to prevent further plugging of sweat ducts
- Limiting strenuous activities
- Staying hydrated
- Staying in cool, air-conditioned spaces or using a fan to circulate air
- Taking a cool shower or bath
- Wearing loose-fitting, breathable clothing made from natural fabrics like cotton



Sun Poisoning

Sun poisoning is a severe sunburn that happens when the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays damage your skin cells, triggering inflammation that leads to symptoms such as:

- **Blistering**
- **Chills**
- **Fever**
- **Nausea**
- **Pain or tenderness**
- **Rash (e.g., itchy bumps)**
- **Redness**
- **Skin peeling**

People with lighter skin are more likely to develop sun poisoning than people with darker skin because they have less melanin. Melanin is a brown pigment your body makes to block harmful UV rays and protect your skin.

Sun poisoning occurs when exposure to the sun's UV rays exceeds melanin's ability to protect your skin. Sun poisoning symptoms typically develop within a few hours and peak (are at their worst) between six and 48 hours after sun exposure.





Treating Sun Poisoning

If you develop sun poisoning, the first thing to do is seek shade or stay indoors until your symptoms subside. In some cases, self-care measures may be enough to treat sun poisoning. Here's how to treat sun poisoning at home:

- **Cool down your skin:** Take a cool bath or shower or place cool, wet washcloths on the affected areas.
- **Consider pain relievers:** Over-the-counter pain relievers like Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen) and Tylenol (acetaminophen) can relieve mild to moderate pain.
- **Hydrate:** Sun poisoning draws fluids away from the rest of your body to hydrate the skin. Drinking plenty of water to replenish lost fluids can prevent dehydration.
- **Let blisters heal:** Do not attempt to pop or scratch blisters that form on your sunburned skin. Breaking open a blister increases the risk of a bacterial skin infection.
- **Moisturize:** Hydrate your skin with an aloe vera–based moisturizer or gel.
- **Use medicated cream:** Apply over-the-counter hydrocortisone cream to the affected area to reduce inflammation and pain. Avoid using benzocaine or lidocaine on a sunburn, which can dehydrate the skin and worsen symptoms.
- **Wear loose clothing:** To prevent skin irritation and worsening pain, opt for loose-fitting clothing made of natural fibers like cotton.



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