



Battling the Heat

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Now that it is officially summer we need to be aware of the heat. Many of you may work, exercise or enjoy outdoor activities and not realize that you may be at risk for a heat related illness. Most people usually try to get out of the heat before they begin to feel ill, but sometimes circumstances will not allow this. Some heat related illnesses can consist of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. Any of these can occur from overexposure to the heat. Heat cramps are the least threatening and are often a warning signal that your body is getting overheated. Heat cramps are muscle spasms that can be very painful. They usually occur in the legs or stomach region. To relieve heat cramps you should rest in a cool place, drink some water, and gently stretch and massage the area. Heat exhaustion is more severe. Some symptoms include cool/moist/pale or flushed skin, headaches, nausea, dizziness, weakness, and fatigue. Heat exhaustion often affects athletes or workers who have to wear heavy clothing in hot and humid environments. Heat stroke is the most severe but thankfully the least common. Some symptoms of heat stroke include red/hot/dry skin, slipping in and out of consciousness, a rapid/weak pulse and rapid/shallow breathing. Heat stroke happens when our bodies become overwhelmed by the heat and stop functioning properly. If these symptoms are not addressed, it may become a serious medical emergency. To care for heat stroke, get out of the heat, loosen any tight clothing, apply cool/wet towels to the skin, and drink water slowly. If any symptoms worsen, for example vomiting or losing consciousness, you need to call 911 as soon as possible. We all like to have fun in the sun, but remember to drink lots of water, apply sunscreen and take frequent "shade" breaks if you need to be out for a long period of time. Have a safe and fun summer!