

## *Heat Illness Prevention*

Now that the summer months are upon us, it is important to be aware of the serious medical conditions that can arise from working in hot weather. With a few simple preventative steps, you can avoid the potentially dangerous consequences of heat related illnesses. Heat illness can be one or more serious medical conditions, such as heat exhaustion, fainting and stroke; heat illness is caused when your body keeps in more heat than it loses. Certain factors can contribute to the likelihood of heat illness, such as dehydration, poor health, prior heat illness or being unaccustomed to working in high temperatures.

There are two main ways to prevent heat illness:

1. Drink cool water throughout the day (approximately 4 cups per hour). Don't wait until you're thirsty, as thirst is a sign you're already dehydrated. The goal is to drink enough water to replace the water your body loses through sweating.
2. When you feel you are starting to overheat, get out of the sun and find a shaded resting place where you can cool down.

To further safeguard yourself against heat illness, make the right choices when it comes to your exposure to the heat. Choose water over sodas and drinks that contain sugar and caffeine. Avoid alcohol; it will only make you dehydrated. Always keep water on hand, or simply know the location of the nearest water supply. Most importantly, listen to your body and pay attention to any signs and symptoms to watch out for: muscle pain, cramping, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, lack of sweating, over-sweating and blurry vision, just to name a few.

Not only should you pay attention to how your own body feels, but look after your fellow coworkers as well. Make sure you know who to call in the event of an emergency, and be sure to start each day knowing who and how to call for help. Remember the two crucial steps to preventing heat illness: Drink plenty of water and make sure you cool down in the shade as needed. Have a safe and healthy summer.

The above information is not a substitute for professional medical advice and is for general informational purposes only. Consult a physician in all matters relating to your health, particularly in matters that may require diagnosis or medical attention. Any action taken as a result of the information provided above is taken at your own discretion.