



HEAT STRESS & HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

As spring turns into summer and brings us “hot weather,” we should all be aware of some tips to prevent heat stress. Remember physical activity at high temperatures can directly affect health. The symptoms of heat stress can also indirectly cause of accidents.

Heat Stress is a signal that says the body is having difficulty maintaining its narrow temperature range. The heart pumps faster, blood is diverted from internal organs to the skin, breathing rate increases, sweating increases, all in an attempt to transfer more heat to the outside air and cool the skin by evaporation of sweat. If the body can't keep up then the person suffers effects ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion, and finally to heat stroke.

Beat the heat. Help prevent the ill effects of heat stress by:

- Drinking water frequently and moderately (every 15-30 minutes—about a glass full). Due to the fact that most of us already consume excessive salt in our diets; salt tablets are not recommended for general use.
- Remember drinking only Gatorade is not as effective as drinking water. You should have a balance intake of fluids, which will include necessary amounts of water.
- Eating lightly; that means eating healthy, not just cutting your portions in half.
- Doing more strenuous jobs during the cooler morning hours, whenever possible.
- Utilizing the ventilation or fans when in enclosed areas.
- Remembering that it takes about 1-2 weeks for the body to adjust to the heat; this adaptation to heat is quickly lost—so your body will need time to adjust after you have been away.
- Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption.
- Wearing light colored, cotton clothes and keeping your shirt on.
- Scheduling frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air conditioned areas.

Listen to your supervisor.

