

## *Heat Exhaustion / Sunstroke*

*“Jacob’s well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.” John 4:6 NLT*

The summer sun in moderation is healthy but can become dangerous if the body gets too warm. Excessive activity, exercise, or time in the sun will increase the body’s temperature which makes you sweat in an effort to release that extra heat. Sometimes this response becomes overloaded, shuts down, and causes a potentially life-threatening condition known as heat stroke or sunstroke. Your symptoms can range from clammy skin, dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, and headaches to an absence of sweating, shallow breathing, confusion, loss of consciousness, and even death.

This rise in body heat can also occur if you participate in an excessive amount of exercise without replacing the body’s fluid. A loss of fluid will occur at a faster rate if your activity is outside in the heat or during times of high humidity. Because of this rapid loss, you will not be aware of your dehydrated state and you will become overheated very quickly. To combat the risk of heat stress or stroke, when exercising or working in a hot environment you must drink 2-4 glasses of water (16 -32 oz) each hour to replace the fluids lost through sweating.

To prevent heat stress or the more serious condition of heat stroke, it is important to know risk factors and tips for prevention. High risk individuals are infants, toddlers, and the elderly as they are not able to control their body’s heat as well as adults. People with disabilities, chronic diseases, certain medications, and working environments in extreme heat are also more susceptible to heat illnesses. Be observant. Decrease the possibility of heat illness by dressing in cool clothing and drinking plenty of fluids without caffeine. Ask your doctor about side effects of your medication, stay in cool places when it is hot and humid, and find shade when working or playing in the heat.

(Source: Center for Disease Control [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/))

### *References / Resources*

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/heatillness.html) - MedlinePlus, National Institute of Health has FAQ sheets and other handouts

[www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/heat-exhaustion-000075.htm](http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/heat-exhaustion-000075.htm) - University of Maryland Medical Center – includes options for complimentary therapies

[www.redcross.org/](http://www.redcross.org/) - American Red Cross – search ‘heat’ and ‘sunstroke’