

The dangers of heat-related illnesses

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Prolonged exposure to both heat and humidity can lead to heat-related illnesses—from heat cramps to exhaustion to life-threatening heatstroke.

Dr. Jesse Bracamonte, a Mayo Clinic family physician, offers recommendations on what to do if you begin to feel ill.

Prolonged exposure to the heat and [humidity](#) can put you at risk for a range of [heat-related illnesses](#), from mild to severe.

"Heat can affect people's bodies by increasing the [core body temperature](#), ability to sweat and cause [dehydration](#) that's causing further medical problems and ensuing issues, and eventually can lead to [heat exhaustion](#) — in some cases, severe heat illness, known as heatstroke," says Dr. Bracamonte.

The biggest health concern, he says, is heatstroke, "which can cause disorientation, confusion, and inability to cool yourself, nausea and vomiting."

Take precautions and seek care at the first signs of heat illness, which can be serious, even life-threatening.

"When an individual has signs of heat-related illness, it's important that they seek care quickly. That includes getting cooled quickly, drinking cool fluids and staying out of the heat," Dr. Bracamonte says.

Drinks containing electrolytes can help with dehydration. He says prevention is best.

"Acclimate to the heat, and don't go out during the warmest parts of the day—try to find the coolest parts of the day to keep yourself healthy and away from heat-related illness," he says.

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