

Protecting Students from Heat Related Illnesses



Extreme heat is a serious, often overlooked health risk, especially for children. Heat-related illnesses cause more deaths each year than any other weather-related danger.

Children are at higher risk due to their still developing bodies, which can't handle heat as well. Schools must recognize and act quickly to prevent heat illness, as children are often outside and may not realize the dangers they face. It's crucial to remain aware and protect all students, especially those who might not recognize or be able to handle heat-related symptoms on their own.

Heat Stroke (A Medical Emergency)

Symptoms:

- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache, dizziness, nausea
- Confusion, loss of consciousness (passing out)

What to do:

- Call 911 immediately – heat stroke is life-threatening.
- Move the person to a cooler environment.
- Use cool cloths or a cool bath to lower body temperature.
- Do not give fluids.

Heat Exhaustion

Symptoms:

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea, muscle cramps
- Fatigue, dizziness, headache
- Fainting

What to do:

- Move to a cooler place and loosen clothing.
- Apply cool, wet clothes or take a cool bath.
- Sip water slowly.
- Seek medical attention if vomiting occurs or symptoms persist for more than 1 hour.

Heat Cramps

Symptoms:

- Heavy sweating during intense exercise
- Muscle cramps

What to do:

- Stop physical activity and move to a cooler location.
- Drink water or sports drinks.
- Wait for cramps to go away before resuming any physical activity.
- Seek medical attention if cramps last longer than 1 hour

Heat Rash

Symptoms:

- Red clusters of small pimples or blisters on the skin
- Itchy or prickly feeling on the skin

What to do:

- Stop any physical activity and move to a cooler location.
- Drink water or sports drinks.
- Use cool cloths on skin and let skin air dry.



Additional Considerations for Younger Children (K-6)

Younger children are especially at risk for heat-related illnesses. Symptoms can be hard to notice, so it's crucial to stay on the lookout for:

- Little or no sweating
- Flushed, red, dry skin
- Rapid, deep breathing
- Dizziness, fatigue, or headache
- Dark yellow urine or infrequent urination
- Loss of consciousness

Urgent Preventive Actions

Prevention is key to protecting students from heat-related illness. Follow our helpful tips:

- **Limit Sun Exposure:** Keep students indoors during the hottest parts of the day. If outdoor activities are necessary, move them to early morning or evening hours, and make sure students are shaded as much as possible.
- **Proper Clothing:** Ensure students wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing, and encourage sun safety measures like sunscreen, hats, and sunglasses.
- **Hydration:** Plan frequent water breaks to help everyone stay hydrated. Ensure water is readily available to students throughout the day.
- **Recognize the Symptoms:** Monitor students closely for symptoms of heat-related illness, especially those who may not realize they're at risk or may not be able to identify the symptoms on their own.



Key Heat-Related Illnesses to Recognize and Respond to (see toolkit page 16)

This document contains information extracted from our
[Toolkit to Protect Students from Extreme Heat on School Campus](#)

