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May 29, 2012

# WELLNESS WEEKLY

## As the Temperature Heats Up...

*Be aware of several health issues that can occur and be sure to take appropriate precautions.*

### Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt contained in sweat. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people taking high blood pressure medication and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Warning signs of heat exhaustion include:

- heavy sweating
- paleness
- muscle cramps
- tiredness
- weakness
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea or vomiting
- fainting

Seek medical attention immediately if symptoms are severe or the victim has heart problems or high blood pressure. Otherwise, help the victim to cool off, and seek medical attention if symptoms worsen or last longer than 1 hour.



### Heat Cramps

Heat cramps usually affect people who sweat significantly during strenuous activity. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion.

What is the treatment for heat cramps?

- Stop all activity, and sit quietly in a cool place.
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage.
- Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in 1 hour.



### Heat Rash

Commonly known as prickly heat, the rash begins to appear as itchy bumps on the chest and back, especially when the air is humid. "Prevention is the best treatment," says Beth Brogan, a physician with IU Medical Group. "It's uncomfortable because it's itchy, but once you have it, there's not a whole lot you can do to make it go away."

Hot muggy weather is the best breeding ground for heat rash, and during these hot summer months is the most likely time for it to develop. If you are going to be spending time outdoors in the heat, wear light-colored, loose clothing. It is important to make sure your sweat glands are not blocked. An increase in humidity makes it more difficult to keep sweat off your skin, thus blocking the sweat glands and causing a rash to develop.

