

## Heat Related Illness

Agricultural workers are at risk for heat related illnesses when they are outside in extreme heat and humidity or in hot indoor environments such as a barn or shop. Some individuals are at greater risk for heat related illnesses including those who are over 65 years of age, are overweight, have heart disease or high blood pressure, or take medications that may be affected by extreme heat. Agricultural workers are also at higher risk due to the protective clothing and equipment they wear. According to the CDC, crop workers died from heat stroke at a rate nearly 20 times greater than for all U.S. civilian workers from 1992—2006.

Heat related illnesses that may affect agricultural workers include heat rash, heat syncope (fainting), heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. The most serious of these are heat exhaustion and heat stroke. See the symptoms and recommended treatment for heat exhaustion and heat stroke below.

Heat Related Illness	Symptoms	Treatment
Heat Exhaustion	heavy sweating; clammy, flushed, or pale skin; weakness; dizziness; nausea; rapid and shallow breathing; headache; vomiting; or fainting	Move the person to a cool area. Place them on their backs with their feet raised. Loosen clothing and apply cool, moist cloths to the body, or fan the victim. Slowly administer sips of salt water (plain water for those with heart or blood pressure problems). Seek medical attention promptly, especially if the person faints or vomits.
Heat Stroke	hot, dry skin, hallucinations, chills, headache, high body temperature, confusion, dizziness and slurred speech  <b>Act Fast! Heat Stroke can result in coma or death.</b>	Call 911 immediately. Move the person to a cool area. Remove their outer clothing. Cool the person by wetting the skin and fanning the body.

To reduce the risk of heat related illness, follow these steps recommended by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity.
  - Take breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently. Drink enough water that you never become thirsty.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, and large amounts of sugar.
- Be aware that protective clothing or personal protective equipment may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.

**Heat Related Illness Resources**

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5724a1.htm>

<http://www.sefsc.noaa.gov/HTMLdocs/heatstress.htm>