

Army *Safety* Gram

Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

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Use Sun Sense

Too much sun while working or playing outdoors can cause sunburns, eye problems and heat illness. Excessive sun exposure can even lead to skin cancer and death.

Working too hard in the heat can cause heat illnesses:

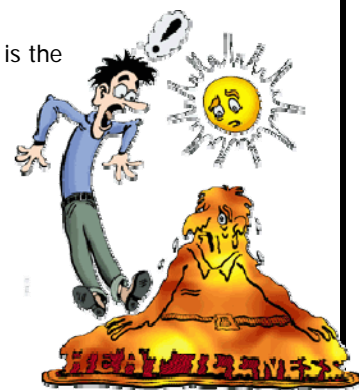
- ♦ Heat cramps are painful spasms in the arms, legs, or stomach area. They occur when the body's supply of salt is depleted by sweating. The cramps may occur while you are working, or when you are relaxing at home later. If cramps occur, rest in the shade and drink lightly salted water.
- ♦ Heat exhaustion occurs when the body's temperature control mechanism starts to malfunction because too much water and salt have been lost to sweating. Dizziness, nausea, headache, heavy sweating, rapid pulse, and shallow breathing are some of the symptoms. Get into the shade and cool off by fanning or pouring cool water over yourself. Rest and drink a lightly salted beverage. Call for medical help immediately.
- ♦ Heat stroke is the most serious form of heat illness, and it can rapidly develop to coma and death. The victim stops sweating and the skin feels hot and dry. The body loses its ability to cool down. Nausea, confusion, strange behavior, dizziness, rapid pulse and weakness are some of the symptoms. Convulsions, unconsciousness, coma, and death can follow rapidly. Call for medical help immediately. Cool off as quickly as possible with cold water or ice.

Use these guidelines for preventing heat illness:

- ♦ Drink water frequently. This will help prevent dehydration, a chief contributor to heat illness. Coffee, tea, alcohol, and many soft drinks are diuretics causing the body to lose water and contribute to heat illness.
- ♦ Eat light foods such as fruits and vegetables while you work in the heat. Have your heavier meal when you are relaxing afterwards. Lightly salted foods may help prevent heat illness because excessive sweating causes your body to lose needed salt along with water.

Sunburn and sun damage to the eyes are also serious concerns in hot weather. Try these tips to avoid overexposure to the sun:

- ♦ Stay in the shade if you can, especially between the hours of 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. when the sun is the brightest and hottest.
- ♦ Cover up with clothing. A hat, long-sleeved shirt, and pants are recommended. Light colored fabrics reflect the heat and feel cooler.
- ♦ Wear sunglasses. When buying sunglasses, read the label to make sure they are made of a material which will protect against ultraviolet radiation.
- ♦ Wear a sunscreen on exposed parts of the body. Check the label to ensure that it is at least SPF #15 (sun protection factor). The sunscreen must be formulated to protect you against both UVA and UVB kinds of ultraviolet rays.
- ♦ You can get sunburned on cloudy days, too. The potential for sunburn is greater around reflective surfaces such as water, sand or concrete and at high altitudes.



Heat illness and sun exposure are serious health and safety concerns. Use sun sense this summer!