

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a non-life-threatening condition caused by the excessive loss of water and salts from the body due to prolonged exposure to extreme heat. The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio reminds older adults and their caregivers that continued heat exposure may lead to heat stroke, which *is* life-threatening. Older adults are highly susceptible to heat exhaustion.

Causes:

- Prolonged exposure to extreme heat
- Loss of body water and salts - usually through sweating
- Not drinking enough fluids

Preventing Heat Exhaustion:

- Limit outdoor activities during extreme heat, especially during the intense sunlight hours from 10 am to 3 pm
- Wear light-colored clothes and hat - they reflect heat from the sun
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day such as water, or juice
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages - they accelerate the effects of heat exhaustion

What to look for:

- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Nausea or upset stomach
- Vomiting
- Sluggishness or fatigue
- Thirst
- Profuse sweating
- Moderate increase in body temperature

Treatment:

- **If the person is showing signs of heat stroke call 911 immediately!**
- Then, move the person to a cool and dry place
- Have the person lie down and rest
- Apply cool water to skin and reapply often
- Fan the wet skin
- Have person drink fluids such as water, or juice
- Apply ice to head, neck, armpits and groin areas