



DIANA M. BONTÁ, R.N., Dr. P.H.  
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
**Department of Health Services**



GRAY DAVIS  
Governor

The summer season with its potential high temperatures is once again approaching. The Department of Aging would like to remind everyone that the elderly and other health compromised individuals are more susceptible to extremes in temperature and dehydration.

The following is a listing of the types of medical emergencies that can occur with these individuals during summer weather conditions and what you can do to treat while awaiting medical attention.

Heat stroke occurs with the body's temperature rises rapidly and the sweating mechanism fails. Within minutes, the body temperature can reach 106 or higher. This high temperature can cause death or permanent disability.

Symptoms of heat stroke:

- Red, hot skin, no sweating
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Severe throbbing headache
- Extremely high body temperature, above 103°F orally
- Dizziness and nausea
- Confusion or unconsciousness
- Uncontrolled twitching

Treatment:

- Move victim to cool, shady area
- Cooling measures with cool water bath or shower until temperature drops to 101° to 102°F orally
- Monitor body temperature
- **Seek immediate medical attention**
- Monitor Intake and Output
- Protect the victim from harm

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

Exhaustion is the body's response to excessive loss of water and salt under heat stress conditions. Populations most vulnerable to heat exhaustion are the elderly or very young, and people working/exercising in the heat. If left untreated, heat exhaustion will lead to heat stroke.



Do your part to help California save energy. To learn more about saving energy, visit the following web site:  
[www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/flex/index.html)

Symptoms of heat exhaustion:

- Heavy sweating
- Pale skin, cool and moist
- Pulse rapid and weak
- Respirations fast and shallow
- Muscle cramping
- Fatigue
- Weakness and dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

Treatment:

- Move victim to cool, air-conditioned environment
- Cool, non-alcoholic beverages if no nausea/vomiting
- Cooling measures including cool bath/shower, light-weight clothing
- Rest
- Monitor body temperature
- **Seek immediate medical attention**
- Monitor Intake and Output

#### OTHER HEAT RELATED CONDITIONS

Heat cramps, sunburn and heat rash can be heat related conditions but are not life threatening. However, if the conditions are ignored, the symptoms can progress leading to more serious problems. Getting out of the sun, cooling measures, rest and hydration are key treatment points.

AFL #04-10  
Page 4  
May 3, 2004

Web Sites For more information: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/emergency/heat](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/emergency/heat)  
[www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heatwave.pdf](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/heatwave.pdf)  
[www.nlm.gov/medlineplus/heatillness](http://www.nlm.gov/medlineplus/heatillness)

Licensing and Certification requirements:

Facilities must have contingency plans in place to deal with either the loss of air conditioning or, in the case when no air conditioning is available, to take measures to ensure patients and residents are kept as cool as possible. Portable fans and other temporary cooling devices should be used when indicated.

Licensing regulations require that all unusual occurrences which threaten the welfare, safety, or health of patients or residents, must be reported to the Department of Health Services (DHS). During normal business hours, please contact the local district office. Outside of normal business hours, please call the DHS duty officer at (916) 328-3605 and ask that the Licensing and Certification duty officer be called.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact your local DHS Licensing and Certification District Office.

Sincerely,

Brenda G. Klutz  
Deputy Director