

Heat related injuries can be fatal

Heat-related injuries can range from a relatively minor problem like heat cramps to a more serious condition like heat stroke, which can be fatal.

Heat stroke occurs when a person can no longer perspire and his or her temperature control mechanism stops working. At first, it will seem like heat exhaustion, but the patient may begin to experience confusion, seizures, and other more severe side effects.

The College Station Fire Department suggests the following tips to stave off the sizzling summer temperatures:

- Slow down - Strenuous activities should be reduced or eliminated, or rescheduled to a cool time of day. Persons at risk, especially the elderly, should stay in the coolest place available out of the sun or in an air-conditioned room.
- Dress for summer - Lightweight, light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight, and helps your body maintain normal temperatures.
- Drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic fluids. Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages. While they may feel as if they are cooling you off, they can worsen the problem.
- Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician. Persons on salt-restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.
- Spend more time in air-conditioned places. Air-conditioning markedly reduces danger from heat. If you cannot afford an air-conditioner, spend some time each day during hot weather in an air-conditioned environment.
- Don't get too much sun. Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.

Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. If a person is experiencing severe signs of exhaustion, it is important to move the victim to a cooler environment and reduce body temperature with ice or cool water. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the person to a hospital immediately.