



“Our Work Shows Pride, With Safety As Our Guide”

IRVING MATERIALS, INC.

Safety Topics

Preventing Heat-Related Illnesses

As I put this article together, we are scheduled to have record or near record temperatures for the next few days.

You can prevent heat-related illnesses. The important thing is to stay well-hydrated, to make sure that your body can get rid of extra heat, and to be sensible about exertion in hot, humid weather.

Sweat is the body's main system for getting rid of extra heat. When you sweat and the water evaporates from your skin, the heat that evaporates the sweat comes mainly from your skin. As long as blood is flowing properly to your skin, extra heat from the core of your body is "pumped" to the skin and removed by sweat evaporation. But, if you do not sweat enough, you cannot get rid of extra heat. You also can't get rid of heat as well if blood is not flowing to the skin.

Dehydration will make it harder for you to cool off in two ways: if you are dehydrated you won't sweat as much, and your body will try to keep blood away from the skin to keep your blood pressure at the right level in the core of your body. Since you lose water when you sweat, you must make up that water to keep from becoming dehydrated. Of course, if the air is humid, it's harder for your sweat to evaporate.

The best fluid to drink when you are sweating is water. Although there is a little salt in your sweat, you don't really lose that much salt with your sweat, except in special circumstances; taking salt tablets may raise your body's sodium level to hazardous levels. (Your doctor can tell you whether or not you need extra salt.) "Sport drinks" such as Gatorade® will also work, but water is usually easier to obtain. And any kind of drinkable water – tap water or bottled spring water – will work; there are bottled waters around that have extra minerals and other things, and in some cases they may be beneficial for you, but plain water works just fine.

It's also important to be sensible about how much you exert yourself in hot weather. The hotter and more humid it is, the harder it will be for you to get rid of ex-

cess heat. The clothing you wear makes a difference, too: the less clothing you have on, and the lighter that clothing is, the easier you can cool off.

Heat Exhaustion

Although partly due to exhaustion – and feeling like exhaustion, as the name implies – heat exhaustion is also a result of excessive heat and dehydration. The signs of heat exhaustion include paleness, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fainting, and a moderately increased temperature (101-102 degrees F) which, in this case, is *not* truly a fever, but caused by the heat. Rest and water may help in mild heat exhaustion, and ice packs and a cool environment (with a fan blowing at the person) may also help. More severely exhausted patients may need IV fluids, especially if vomiting keeps them from drinking enough.

Heat Stroke

If someone has these symptoms, stop right here and call your doctor or EMS.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency!

Heat stroke is the most severe form of heat illness. It can occur even in people who are not exercising, if the weather is hot enough. These people have warm, flushed skin, and usually *do not sweat*. Whether exercise-related or not, *a person with heat stroke usually has a very high temperature (106 degrees F or higher), and may be delirious, unconscious, or having seizures*. These patients need to have their temperature reduced quickly, often with ice packs, and must also be given IV fluids for rehydration; they must be taken to the hospital as quickly as possible (EMS is appropriate here), and may have to stay in the hospital for observation since many different body organs can fail in heat stroke.

Don't fool around when we are having heat indexes in excess of 100°. Drink lots of fluids, especially water. Avoid alcohol and minimize caffeine. Move at a little slower pace until it cools down again!

My thanks to Dr. Reddy who had this information on the Web.

For What It Is Worth! *On The Lighter Side—* Truths children have learned

- No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a Tic-Tac.

Truths adults have learned

- Raising teenagers is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree.
- Middle age is when you choose cereal for the fiber, not the toy.
- If you can remain calm, you don't have all the facts.
- You're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoes and wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- You appreciate the fact that wrinkles don't hurt.

