



Prevent and treat heat-related illness

**Know the signs and
beat the heat!**



Heat cramps

Actions to take:

- Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
- Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
- Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

Look for:

- Lots of sweating
- Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

Seek medical attention if:

- The person's symptoms are getting worse
- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- The person is on a low sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

Heat exhaustion

Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

- Feeling tired or weak
- Fast or weak pulse
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache or dizziness
- Irritability

Actions to take:

- Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
- Move them to a cool place
- Encourage them to lie down
- Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
- Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

Seek medical attention if:

- The person is throwing up
- The person is getting worse
- Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
- The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

Heat stroke

Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

- High body temperature (higher than 103°F)
- Throbbing headache
- Seizures
- Altered mental state or confusion
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

Actions to take:

- **CALL 911 – THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
- **Cool Immediately:**
 - Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
 - Remove outer clothing
- **Keep them safe:**
 - If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
 - If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury





Extreme Heat - Best practices for public and semi-public pool operators

Plan and educate:

- **Check the DPH [Unhealthy Heat Forecast webpage](#)** for forecasted heat risk. For DCR operated pools, pay attention to DPH e-mail alerts when an unhealthy heat wave is forecast.
- Make sure you and your staff know your pool's capacity and **monitor the bather load** throughout the day
- Train staff how to **recognize and monitor the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness (HRI)** and the actions to take listed on page one
- **Identify swimmers and staff who are at greater risk for heat-related illness** Staff should know that people who work outdoors, older adults (age 65+), infants and children, pregnant people, and people with chronic medical conditions like asthma and diabetes are more likely to get sick from unhealthy heat.
- **Warn staff** about [acclimatization](#). People who are not used to unhealthy heat, are more at risk during their first unhealthy heat wave. **Remember, the first is the worst!**
- **Implement a buddy system** for staff to watch for the early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. Prioritize the people at greatest risk and take action quickly if they see signs of HRI.

Hydrate:

- Advise staff on the **importance of hydration** with easy-to-understand factsheets and post them near drinking water sources: [Heat Stress: Hydration](#) [Protect your workers from heat stress](#)
- Staff and swimmers should not wait until they are thirsty to drink

Consider schedules, clothing, and chemicals

- **Schedule enough lifeguards** to provide adequate oversight for a pool to operate at full capacity. DPH recommends 1 lifeguard per 25 swimmers.
- While not as safe, if you don't have enough lifeguards, be prepared to use other **responsible adults** to assist with monitoring on the deck and in the water
- Maintain surplus **red or orange hats, sunblock with a high SPF, and lip balm** for personal protection of additional lifeguards and/or adults assisting with monitoring safety
- Provide **extra protective equipment** including whistles or amplification devices for additional lifeguards and/or adults assisting with monitoring
- Keep enough disinfection and treatment chemicals to **maintain a safe and healthy pool** during operation and after (for shocking procedures)

Identify or create cooler spaces

- **Provide shaded areas** (natural or artificial such as canopies or umbrellas) for those waiting to use the pool, especially for days when there may be long waiting times

Monitor:

- Monitor the bather load throughout the day. **Do not exceed capacity.**
- **Test water** more frequently than the minimum 4 times a day to maintain the disinfection level during and after high use and excessive UV rays (sun) exposure which both affect pool chemistry

