

Dear valued partner,

Even though summer is halfway through, we still have a lot of hot days ahead of us. This newsletter, we will address heat related illnesses.

Which of the following is NOT a reason (listed by the CDC) to seek medical attention due to **heat cramps**?

- a) Has heart problems
- b) Sweating profusely
- c) Is on a low sodium diet
- d) Has cramps that do not subside within 1 hour

*Answer at the end of the email.*



(Missed a previous email? [Click here](#) to see an archive of previous month's safety emails on Rockwood's Loss Control website.)



## WHAT ARE Heat Related Illnesses?

If your body is overheating, and you have a high temperature, bumps on your skin, muscle spasms, headache, dizziness, nausea or a number of other symptoms, you may have one of the most common heat-related illnesses: heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat illnesses range from mild to severe, and heat stroke can be deadly.

### What are the different types of heat illnesses?

A heat illness is one caused by high temperatures and humidity. You may get an illness while exercising or working in high heat and humidity. The four most common heat illnesses include:

1. [Heat rash](#) (also called prickly heat or miliaria), which is a stinging skin irritation that turns your skin red.
2. [Heat cramps](#), which are painful spasms in your muscles.
3. [Heat exhaustion](#), which is caused by too few fluids and long hours in high temperatures, causes heavy sweating, a fast and weak pulse and rapid breathing.
4. [Heat stroke](#), which is a life-threatening illness, happens when your temperatures rises above 106 degrees Fahrenheit (41 degrees Celsius) quickly – within minutes.

Your body sweats to keep itself cool. If temperatures and humidity are too high, sweating isn't effective enough.

### How does the body stay cool?

The process that helps your body keep a healthy core temperature is called thermoregulation. Thermoregulation is controlled by a region of your brain called the hypothalamus. It activates receptors in your skin and other organs that cause you to lose heat and keep a normal core temperature. When your body gets really hot, it relies on sweat evaporation to dissipate heat (make the heat go away). If the heat entering your body is

more than the rate of heat leaving your body, your core temperature will rise and you'll be at risk for a heat-related illness.

### Who gets heat illnesses?

If you work outside, or inside in a hot and humid environment, you're more likely to endure a heat illness. Examples of people who might be in such an environment include:

- Construction workers
- Military personnel
- Landscapers
- Maintenance workers
- Athletes
- Firefighters
- Farmers
- Utility workers

### Additional factors that increase your risk of getting a heat illness include:

- **Dehydration.** If you're dehydrated, meaning you don't have enough fluids in your body, you're more at risk of a heat illness.
- **Weight.** Obesity and/or poor physical fitness.
- **Certain prescription medications.** These include tranquilizers, water pills, antihistamines, beta blockers, laxatives and drugs used to treat mental illnesses or Parkinson's disease.
- **Substance Use.** Using illegal drugs or alcohol.
- **Experience.** Lack of experience working in heat, working outdoors or doing heavy work. You may need to take breaks and spend some time in the shade.
- **Illness,** specifically medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney problems and heart problems. Also pregnancy, and symptoms like high blood pressure and fever.
- **Heavy, dark or light clothing.** If you must wear heavy equipment and clothing like sports padding and helmets, police and fire uniforms and industrial protective equipment, you're in danger of developing a heat illness.
- **Age.** If your child is four years old or younger, or you're 65 or older, you're at a higher risk. Infants and young children commonly get heat rash.
- **Gender.** Males are more likely to get a heat illness than females.
- **History.** Prior history of heat-related illnesses.



## SAFETY TIPS FOR Heat Related Illnesses

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid*
<b>Heat stroke</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Fainting</li> <li>• Seizures</li> <li>• Excessive sweating or red, hot, dry skin</li> <li>• Very high body temperature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 911</li> </ul> <p>While waiting for help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place worker in shady, cool area</li> <li>• Loosen clothing, remove outer clothing</li> <li>• Fan air on worker; cold packs in armpits</li> <li>• Wet worker with cool water; apply ice packs, cool compresses, or ice if available</li> <li>• Provide fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible</li> <li>• Stay with worker until help arrives</li> </ul>
<b>Heat exhaustion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cool, moist skin</li> <li>• Heavy sweating</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Light headedness</li> <li>• Weakness</li> <li>• Thirst</li> <li>• Irritability</li> <li>• Fast heart beat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have worker sit or lie down in a cool, shady area</li> <li>• Give worker plenty of water or other cool beverages to drink</li> <li>• Cool worker with cold compresses/ice packs</li> <li>• Take to clinic or emergency room for medical evaluation or treatment if signs or symptoms worsen or do not improve within 60 minutes.</li> <li>• Do not return to work that day</li> </ul>
<b>Heat cramps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muscle spasms</li> <li>• Pain</li> <li>• Usually in abdomen, arms, or legs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have worker rest in shady, cool area</li> <li>• Worker should drink water or other cool beverages</li> <li>• Wait a few hours before allowing worker to return to strenuous work</li> <li>• Have worker seek medical attention if cramps don't go away</li> </ul>
<b>Heat rash</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clusters of red bumps on skin</li> <li>• Often appears on neck, upper chest, folds of skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to work in a cooler, less humid environment when possible</li> <li>• Keep the affected area dry</li> </ul>

\* Remember, if you are not a medical professional, use this information as a guide only to help workers in need.

Chart from OSHA.gov



### **Rockwood Resources:**

- [Heat Exhaustion & Stroke](#) | Toolbox talk
- [Heat Stress Prevention Practices](#) | Tips
- [Beat the Heat](#) | Rest, Water, Shade - Poster
- You can find additional Rockwood Toolbox Talks [here](#).

### **MSHA, OSHA and other Resources:**

- [Proposed Rule | Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) – See OSHA’s proposed rule to protect indoor / outdoor workers from extreme heat
- [Heat Stress | NIOSH | CDC](#) – See additional tabs on the left (after clicking this link) for information on Heat Related Illness, Recommendations, Acclimatization, PPE Burden, etc.
- [Heat - Heat-related Illnesses and First Aid](#) | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- [Surviving the Hot Weather](#) | National Safety Council



## **Learn more about Heat Related Illness on Streamery**

Every Rockwood policy includes access to Streamery, a vast safety library with videos, quizzes and more resources to help you promote safety in your workplace. If you don't

have access, contact us to get a username. Enter the SKU number below to find the recommended video.

Watch [Streamery](#) videos on **Heat Related Illness**:

- **Indoor Heat Illness – Facts and Prevention:** 9 min | SKU: 5150 + 5150-S | English & Spanish
- **Heat Stress Working Safely in the Heat:** 12 min | SKU: 3608 | English
- **Understanding & Preventing Heat – Related Illnesses:** 17 min | SKU: 2806 + 2806-S | English & Spanish
- **Many more on Streamery**



**BONUS MATERIALS:**

**1. National Safety Council’s Safe+Sound Week is Aug. 12-18, 2024**

- Led by OSHA, Safe+Sound Week is a nationwide event to recognize the steps businesses have taken to improve workplace safety and health. Implementing a safety and health program can improve businesses' safety and health performance, save money and improve competitiveness. Visit the [Safe+Sound Week webpage](#) to sign up to participate, and for ideas on planning your event. [Safe+Sound Week - National Safety Council \(nsc.org\)](#)
- Additionally, you can register for WVU’s Safety Extension Safe and Sound **FREE** webinar here: [WVU-ES](#)

**2. SEAT BELT COVERS**



Don’t forget that Rockwood Casualty is providing **FREE** high visibility seatbelt covers to our insured to assist in enforcement of seatbelt use by employees. Please contact [safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com](mailto:safetysolutions@rockwoodcasualty.com) to make a request for your company and specify orange or yellow.



**Questions? Feel free to reach out:** As always, your Rockwood partners are available to answer your questions and help you promote safety in the workplace. Contact Rockwood Loss Control for any support you need.

**ANSWER:** Which of the following is not a reason (listed by the CDC) to seek medical attention due to heat cramps?

- Has heart problems

- **Sweating profusely**
- Is on a low sodium diet
- Has cramps that do not subside within 1 hour

*While sweating profusely is still a reason to seek medical attention, this would indicate a sign of potential heat stroke, not heat cramps.*



#RockwoodSafetySolutions #LossControl #SafetyTips

Thank you for your continued partnership,

Rockwood Loss Control Team

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