

## **Symptoms of Heat Stroke**

The hallmark symptom of heat stroke is a core body temperature above 105 degrees Fahrenheit. But fainting may be the first sign.

Other symptoms may include:

- ✦ Throbbing headache
- ✦ Dizziness and light-headedness
- ✦ Lack of sweating despite the heat
- ✦ Red, hot, and dry skin
- ✦ Muscle weakness or cramps
- ✦ Nausea and vomiting
- ✦ Rapid heartbeat, which may be either strong or weak
- ✦ Rapid, shallow breathing
- ✦ Behavioral changes such as confusion, disorientation, or staggering
- ✦ Seizures
- ✦ Unconsciousness

## **First Aid for Heat Stroke**

If you suspect that someone has a heat stroke, immediately call 911 or transport the person to a hospital. Any delay seeking medical help can be fatal.

While waiting for the paramedics to arrive, initiate first aid. Move the person to an air-conditioned environment -- or at least a cool, shady area -- and remove any unnecessary clothing.

If possible, take the person's core body temperature and initiate first aid to cool it to 101 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit. If no thermometers are available, don't hesitate to initiate first aid.

You may also try these cooling strategies:

- ✦ Fan air over the patient while wetting his or her skin with water from a sponge or garden hose.
- ✦ Apply ice packs to the patient's armpits, groin, neck, and back. Because these areas are rich with blood vessels close to the skin, cooling them may reduce body temperature.
- ✦ Immerse the patient in a shower or tub of cool water, or an ice bath.

If emergency response is delayed, call the hospital emergency room for additional instructions.

After you've recovered from heat stroke, you'll probably be more sensitive to high temperatures during the following week. So it's best to avoid hot weather and heavy exercise until your doctor tells you that it's safe to resume your normal activities.