

Heat stroke facts

- Heat stroke is a form of [hyperthermia](#) in which the body temperature is elevated dramatically.
- Heat stroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal if not promptly and properly treated.
- Cooling the victim is a critical step in the treatment of heat stroke. Always notify emergency services immediately if heat stroke is suspected.
- The most important measures to prevent heat strokes are to avoid becoming dehydrated and to avoid vigorous physical activities in hot and humid weather.
- Infants, the elderly, athletes, and outdoor workers are the groups at greatest risk for heat stroke.

What is, and who is at risk for heat stroke?

Heat stroke is a form of hyperthermia or [heat-related illness](#), an abnormally elevated body temperature with accompanying physical symptoms including changes in the nervous system function. Unlike [heat cramps](#) and [heat exhaustion](#), two other forms of hyperthermia that are less severe, **heat stroke is a true medical emergency that is often fatal if not properly and promptly treated.** Heat stroke is also sometimes referred to as heatstroke or sun stroke. Severe hyperthermia is defined as a body temperature of 104 F (40 C) or higher.

The body normally generates heat as a result of metabolism, and is usually able to dissipate the heat by radiation of heat through the skin or by evaporation of sweat. However, **in extreme heat, high humidity, or vigorous physical exertion under the sun, the body may not be able to sufficiently dissipate the heat and the body temperature rises**, sometimes up to 106 F (41.1 C) or higher. **Another cause of heat stroke is [dehydration](#).** A dehydrated person may not be able to sweat fast enough to dissipate heat, which causes the body temperature to rise.

Those most susceptible (at risk) individuals to heat stroke include:

- Infants
- The elderly (often with associated heart diseases, lung diseases, kidney diseases, or who are taking medications that make them vulnerable to dehydration and heat strokes)
- **Athletes**
- **Individuals who work outside and physically exert themselves under the sun**

Heat stroke is sometimes classified as exertional heat stroke (EHS, which is due to overexertion in hot weather) or non-exertional heat stroke (NEHS, which occurs in climactic extremes and affects the elderly, infants, and chronically ill.

The information above was provided by www.medicinenet.com .