

SAFE
Summer



What Have You Done to Save a Life Today?



4905, 5th Ave. Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363
Comm. (334) 255-2919 – Fax (334) 255-2609
<https://safety.army.mil>

Stay safe-Stay cool

Brenda Donnell
Strategic Communication Directorate
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center
Fort Rucker, Ala.

Soldiers train and work in all sorts of weather including extreme heat, and mission requirements often demand intense physical activity that can cause dehydration and heat illnesses that can adversely impact mission completion.

“Physical activity is really important in the Army whether you’re doing (physical training) or any type of manual labor or being deployed in a hot climate,” said 2nd Lt. Christopher Heuer, environmental health chief, Lyster Army Health Clinic. “It’s important to find ways to compensate when your body can’t cool itself.”

Heat-related injuries were the cause of death for two Soldiers in fiscal 2010 during physical fitness training or testing, according to Alan Longshore, chief, Operations Research and Systems Analysis Division, U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center. Longshore also reported 18 non-fatal, heat related injuries, which were classified as heat stroke or heat exhaustion.

Heuer said some individuals have certain propensities that can cause them to become heat casualties. These include people who aren’t accustomed to hot weather, who are obese or overweight, who are taking certain types of drugs, who have colds or fever, who have been drinking alcohol, and people who have a history of heat injuries.

Heat illnesses can affect just about anyone; however, so it's important to know and recognize what they are and how they affect individuals.

"There are three types—heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke," Heuer said. "Each has specific characteristics."

Symptoms

Heuer identified the symptoms for each injury from least to most severe:

Heat cramps can cause spasms in arms, legs and stomach and are caused by loss of salts in the body.

Heat exhaustion can result in headaches, paleness, clammy skin, excessive sweating, difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, nausea and exhaustion.

The most severe injury is heat stroke. This can occur when the body's regulatory mechanism basically stops working. Heat stroke can be fatal. Symptoms include, headache, dizziness, delirium, nausea and vomiting and a body temperature of 106 F. This is a medical emergency, and emergency medical services should be called or the victim should be transported to a hospital immediately.

Treatment

Department of the Army and Air Force Technical Bulletin Medical 507/Air Force Pamphlet 48-152 (I) recommends the following treatment for anyone experiencing heat-related injuries:

Heat cramps:

- Sip water.
- Massage the cramping areas.
- Replacement of salt through normal meals is suggested. Do not take salt tablets unless prescribed by a physician.

Heat exhaustion:

- Sip water.
- Have victim lie in the shade and rest.
- Loosen or remove clothing.

Heat stroke:

- Get immediate emergency medical care.
- Wrap victim in ice sheets or immerse in ice water.
- Monitor breathing.

Prevention

Heuer said training is an important way to prevent heat illnesses.

“Education is always important, which means training your Soldiers and educating them about the dangers of heat injuries and ways of preventing them,” Heuer said. “Also, being proactive, making sure they are drinking plenty of water and staying out of the sun when they can and supplying them with sunscreen.”

TBM 507/AFP48-152 (I) recommends the following steps to prevent heat-induced illnesses:

- Heat acclimatization in new environments or weather conditions.
- Implement work/rest cycles customized to climate, working intensity and military situation.
- Adequate hydration that replaces fluids lost through sweating.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.

For more information, visit <https://safety.army.mil/>,

http://armypubs.army.mil/med/dr_pubs/dr_a/pdf/tbmed507.pdf

and

<http://phc.amedd.army.mil/topics/discond/hipss/Pages/HeatInjuryPrevention.aspx>.



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