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Respect the Heat

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Outdoor activities are one way to enjoy the warm weather of spring and summer, but Soldiers and Family members should be mindful that high temperatures pose a significant risk for heat injury.

According to the U.S. Army Public Health Command, first prevention, then early recognition and treatment of heat injuries, are critical to curbing weather-related deaths. Soldiers have been trained to prevent and identify heat injuries on duty, and they can apply that same knowledge to protect themselves and their Family members 24/7. One helpful source is Technical Bulletin Medical 507/Air Force Pamphlet 48-152 (I), which describes the symptoms of and treatment protocols for the three most common heat injuries:

- **Heat cramps.** Symptoms: spasms in the arms, legs or stomach. Treatment: sip water, massage cramping areas and replace lost salt through food. Never take salt tablets unless directed by a physician.
- **Heat exhaustion.** Symptoms: headaches, paleness, clammy skin, excessive sweating, difficulty breathing, loss of appetite, nausea and exhaustion. Treatment: sip water, lie in a shaded area and rest, and loosen or remove clothing.
- **Heat stroke.** Symptoms: headache, dizziness, delirium, nausea, vomiting and body temperature of 106 F or higher. Treatment: Heat stroke is a medical emergency and can be fatal. Immediately call 911 and follow the dispatcher's instructions for treatment you can perform before help arrives. Reducing body temperature is paramount in rescue efforts, and the most effective cooling strategy entails removing the victim's clothing and immersing him or her in cool or iced water while massaging the skin (ice sheets or ice packs are acceptable if immersion isn't possible). Anyone suspected to be suffering from heat stroke should be transported to a hospital immediately, preferably by trained medical professionals such as paramedics.

For additional information on heat injuries, visit <https://safety.army.mil>.

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