

# MSU - Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

Prevent Heat Stress

Summer is just around the corner and with that season comes a lot of heat risks. In agriculture and outdoor recreation activities in Mississippi's heat, we have to be cognizant of those heat factors that can make a good working schedule or outdoor planned recreational a bit of confusion with the heat.

We know that the sun is a livelihood for our crops, but it can be a holy terror with people who don't respect the sun. I believe that discussing heat problems before the real hot temperatures get here will aid those folks that use these tips and information seriously.

## Heat Stress and Heat Illness are Serious Matters-

- ✓ Heat stress is a buildup of body heat generated either internally by muscle use or externally by the environment.
- ✓ Heat exhaustion or heat stroke results when the body is overwhelmed by heat. As the heat increases, body temperature and the heart rate rises painlessly.
- ✓ The most serious heat related illness is heat stroke. The symptoms are confusion, irrational behavior, convulsions, coma, and death. While over 20% of heat stroke victims die regardless of age, children seem to be more susceptible to heat strain than adults. In some cases, the side effects of heat stroke are heat sensitivity and varying degrees of brain and kidney damage.

## **HIGH TEMPERATURE + HIGH HUMIDITY + PHYSICAL ACTIVITY = HEAT ILLNESS**

Following are examples of heat illnesses, their symptoms, descriptions, and precautions to take:

### Heat Cramps:

**Description** – Painful muscle spasms cause by loss of salt from excessive sweating.

**Symptoms** – Muscular pain and excessive sweating.

#### **What to do-**

- Get the victim to a cool place.
- Give the victim cool drinks sprinkled with salt and salty foods, but not salt tablets.
- Remove tight or wet clothing which may restrict the blood flow.
- If the cramps continue, seek medical help.

### Heat Stroke:

**Description** – A condition in which the body's temperature rises above 106 degrees F (41 degrees C) and, if not treated immediately, may result in a coma, brain damage, or death.

#### **Symptoms-**

- ~ Hot, dry, flushed skin, usually with no sweating
- ~ Agitation and confusion
- ~ Headaches, nausea, and vomiting
- ~ Irregular pulse
- ~ Rapid shallow breathing

- ~ Possible seizures and loss of consciousness
- ~ Possible shock and cardiac arrest

#### **What to do-**

- Heat stroke is a medical emergency; get medical help ASAP!
- Check victim's airway, breathing, and circulation. Give CPR if needed.
- Cool victim with sponge or spray, cover with cold, wet cloths, place ice packs under their armpits and groin, and fan them.
- Move the victim to a cool area.
- Loosen or remove outer clothing.
- If victim is conscious, provide cool drinks sprinkled with salt and salty foods, but not salt tablets.

### Heat Exhaustion:

**Description**–A more advanced and serious stage of heat stress.

#### **Symptoms-**

- ~ General fatigue
- ~ Dizziness and fainting
- ~ Headaches and nausea
- ~ Cool, clammy skin
- ~ Heavy sweating
- ~ Cramps
- ~ Rapid pulse, shallow breathing

#### **What to do-**

- ~ Heat exhaustion is life-threatening; get medical help ASAP!
- ~ Check victim's airway, breathing, and circulation. Give CPR if needed. **If you don't know CPR, get CPR certified. We offer classes yearly!**
- ~ Cool victim with sponge or spray, cover with cold, wet cloths, place ice packs under the armpits and groin, and fan them.
- ~ Move the victim to a cool area.
- ~ Loosen or remove outer clothing.
- ~ If the victim is conscious, provide cool drinks sprinkled with salt and salty foods, but no salt tablets.

### PROTECT YOURSELF-

- ✓ Learn to recognize the symptoms of heat stress and how to treat them.
- ✓ On hot days, don't spare the water; drink often during the day.
- ✓ Wear loose clothes made of cotton and other fabrics that allow the air to pass through.
- ✓ Gauge your work habits and take sufficient breaks.

**KNOWING CPR CAN SAVE A  
LIFE!**

**GET CERTIFIED TODAY**

**BE ALERT <> BE ALIVE**

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