

# Heat-induced illnesses



**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY  
CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

**DRSABCD** Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation. [DOWNLOAD THE DRSABCD FACT SHEET.](#)

## HEAT EXHAUSTION

### WARNING

If a person with heat exhaustion is not managed appropriately, they can develop heat stroke.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- feeling hot, exhausted, weak and fatigued
- persistent headache
- thirst
- nausea
- faintness, dizziness
- rapid breathing and shortness of breath
- pale, cool, moist skin
- rapid, weak pulse

### WHAT TO DO

- 1 Move the patient to a cool place with circulating air.
- 2 Help the patient to sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- 3 Remove unnecessary clothing from the patient, and loosen any tight clothing.
- 4 Sponge the patient with cold water.
- 5 Give the patient cool water to drink.
- 6 Seek medical aid if the patient vomits or does not recover quickly.

## HEAT STROKE

### WARNING

Heat stroke is potentially life-threatening and immediate medical aid is needed.

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- high body temperature of 40°C or more
- flushed, dry skin
- pounding, rapid pulse that gradually weakens
- headache and irritability
- nausea, vomiting
- visual disturbances
- faintness, dizziness, confusion
- loss of consciousness
- seizures

### WHAT TO DO

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- 3 Move the patient to a cool place with circulating air.
- 4 Help the patient to sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
- 5 Remove almost all the patient's clothing, and loosen any tight clothing.
- 6 Apply a cold pack to areas of large blood vessels such as the neck, groin and armpits, to accelerate cooling.
- 7 If possible, cover the patient with a wet sheet and fan to increase air circulation. Stop cooling when the patient feels cold to touch.
- 8 If patient is fully conscious and is able to swallow, give them cool water to sip.

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