



Wellness Services

Screenings

- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Colo-rectal cancer
- PSA

Health Risk Appraisals

- Pulse and blood pressure
- Height/weight
- Percent fat
- Waist circumference
- Cholesterol, triglycerides, glucose

Immunizations

- Flu
- Hepatitis B
- Tuberculosis

CPR and First Aid Training

AED programs

Wellness Coaching

Incentive Program

Coordination

Smoking Cessation

Drug Free Worksite

Programs

Executive/Annual Physicals

Health Fairs

Wellness Education

Wellness at Work is a informational publication provided by MED-1 Occupational Health System to facilitate health and wellness initiatives for employees.

For more information on any topics presented, a Spanish version, or to access additional copies of current or past issues, contact Tammie Milligan at 616-916-5040 or go to — www.med1services.com.

Wellness At Work

A MED-1 Occupational Health System publication promoting health and wellness in the workplace.

Working in Hot Environments

From iron workers to construction to pastry bakers, West Michigan works in a wide variety of hot and humid environments. As the warm weather approaches, many more workers will face hot conditions.

Heat related disorders can include:

- ✓ Heat stroke
- ✓ Heat exhaustion
- ✓ Heat cramps
- ✓ Fainting
- ✓ Heat rash

Preventing Heat Stress

Following a few basic precautions should lessen, or even eliminate, heat stress.

Engineering controls, such as general ventilation and spot cooling help defuse excess heat. Shielding protects employees from radiant heat sources. Evaporative cooling and mechanical refrigeration are other ways to reduce heat. Eliminating steam leaks, using power tools, and protective clothing also reduce the hazards of heat exposure for workers.

Work practices include providing plenty of water—as much as a quart per worker per hour. Also train first aid workers to recognize and treat heat stress quickly.

Alternating work and rest periods in a cooler area avoids overheated workers. If possible, heavy work should be scheduled during mornings and evenings.

Acclimatization to the heat through short exposures followed by longer periods of work in the hot environment can reduce heat stress. New employees and those returning from an extended absence should have a recommended 5-day period of adjustment starting at 50/50 work and rest.

Employee education is vital to make workers aware of the need to replace fluids and salt lost through sweat. And to recognize the signs of dehydration, exhaustion, and other heat stresses.

Safety Problems

Heat tends to promote accidents due to the slipperiness of sweaty palms, dizziness, or the fogging of safety glasses. Hot surfaces create steam and also the possibility of burns.

Working in hot environments lowers mental alertness and physical performance. Increased body temperature also contributes to irritability, anger, and other emotional states that divert attention from potentially hazardous tasks.

More Information...

The U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (www.osha.gov) offers a FREE 15-page booklet, *Working in Hot Environments*:

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Publications

4676 Columbia Parkway

Cincinnati, Ohio 45226

Telephone (513) 533-8287.

You can also rely on MED-1 to provide more information on “beating the heat” in your work environment because we see your employees every day and know how important health and safety is to you.

For more information, contact Mary Alice Ehrlich at maehrlich@med1services.com or Tammie Milligan at tmilligan@med1services.com.

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Protect Yourself From Heat Stress

Heat Stress Response:

- ✓ Call 911 (or local emergency) at once.
- ✓ Move the worker to a cool, shaded area.
- ✓ Loosen or remove heavy clothing.
- ✓ Provide cool drinking water.
- ✓ Fan and mist the person with water.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh or www.osha.gov

Many workers spend some part of their working day in a hot environment. And, summer is coming. As the warm weather approaches, the potential for heat-related body stresses rises with the temperature.

What is Heat Stress?

When the body is unable to cool itself by sweating, several heat-induced illnesses such as heat stress or heat exhaustion can occur.

To keep internal temperatures within safe limits, the body must get rid of excess heat, primarily through the release of fluid onto the skin—or sweat. The heart also pumps faster to send more blood to vessels at the surface of the body to expand and cool.

Factors leading to heat stress include:

- ✓ high temperature and humidity;
- ✓ direct sun or heat;
- ✓ limited air movement;
- ✓ physical exertion;
- ✓ poor physical condition;
- ✓ some medications; and,
- ✓ inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces.

These factors limit the ability of the body to sweat and cool.



What are the Symptoms?

Heat stress can cause:

- ✓ Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.
- ✓ Weakness and moist skin.
- ✓ Mood changes such as irritability or confusion
- ✓ Upset stomach or vomiting

If the conditions persist, heat stroke can result with symptoms of:

- ✓ Dry, hot skin with no sweating.
- ✓ Mental confusion or losing consciousness.
- ✓ Seizures or convulsions.

Preparing for the Heat

Humans are, to a large extent, capable of adjusting to the heat. This adjustment to heat, under normal circumstances, usually takes about 5 to 7 days, when the body will undergo a series of changes to make continued exposure to heat more endurable.

How can you Prevent Heat Stress?

Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses so you can monitor yourself and your co-workers.

Drink lots of water—about 1 cup every 15 minutes.

Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.

Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.

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