HeatWise
Caregiver Climate Resilience Toolkit

Heat-Related Illnesses

What Caregivers Need to Know

As a family caregiver, it's important to recognize the signs of heat-related illnesses in both your loved one and yourself. This quick-reference guide lists common symptoms, what actions to take, and tips to prevent each illness during extreme heat events.

Symptoms	What to Do	Illness Name	Prevention Tips
Thirst, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, heavy sweating, cold or clammy skin, rapid pulse	Move to a cool place, rest, offer water or sports drinks (with electrolytes), loosen clothing, apply cool cloths	**Heat Exhaustion**	Stay hydrated, take breaks, avoid strenuous activity during hottest times (11am–4pm), wear breathable clothing
High body temp (≥104°F), confusion, fainting, no sweating, red/hot skin, rapid pulse	Call 911 immediately, move to shade or AC, use cool cloths, remove excess clothing, fan the person	**Heat Stroke (Life-threatening)**	Avoid activity in high heat, stay indoors during heat advisories, use AC or visit a cooling center
Muscle cramps in legs, arms, or stomach; moist and cool skin	Stop activity, rest in a cool place, drink fluids with electrolytes, stretch gently	**Heat Cramps**	Stretch before activity, stay hydrated, avoid caffeine and alcohol
Dizziness or fainting after standing or during activity in heat	Sit or lie down in a cool place, elevate feet, drink water	**Heat Syncope**	Rise slowly, avoid standing for long periods in the sun, hydrate often
Mild swelling in feet and ankles	Elevate legs, monitor symptoms, consult a doctor if it persists or worsens	**Heat Edema**	Avoid prolonged standing, wear compression socks, stay cool
Red, itchy clusters of small bumps; prickly or stinging sensation	Keep area dry and cool, wear loose clothing, apply powder if needed	**Heat Rash**	Bathe daily, change sweaty clothes, avoid tight clothing
Red, tender skin, blisters, warmth, chills, or fever	Move out of sun, apply cool compresses, moisturize, avoid further exposure	**Sunburn**	Use SPF 30+ sunscreen, wear protective clothing, stay in shade (10am–4pm)

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Learn more at **losangelescrc.usc.edu/heatwise**