

Prevention of Heat Illness

During periods of high temperature and humidity, there are things everyone (particularly people at high risk) should do to lessen the chances of heat illness:

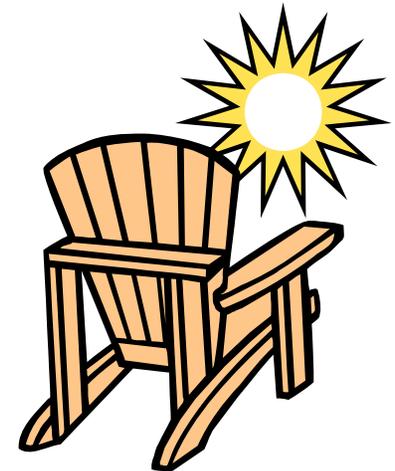
- * Avoid over-exertion, particularly during warmer periods of the day
- * Apply sun screen as needed
- * Keep windows shut, and draperies, shades or blinds drawn during the heat of the day; open windows in the evening or night hours when the air outside is cooler
- * Move to cooler rooms during the heat of the day
- * Drink plenty of fluids
- * Dress in loose fitting, light-colored clothing
- * Lose weight if you are overweight
- * Eat a little more salt, unless your diet prohibits it

Major Antipsychotic Medications

Trade Name	Generic Name
Abilify	aripiprazole
Clozaril	clozapine
Geodon	ziprasidone
Haldol	haloperidol
Loxitane	loxapine
Invega	paliperidone
Mellaril	thloridazine
Moban	molindone
Navane	thiothixene
Prolixin	fluphenazine
Risperdal	risperidone
Serentil	mesoridazine
Seroquel	quetiapine
Stelazine	trifluoperazine
Thorazine	chlorpromazine
Trilafon	perphenazine
Zyprexa	olanzapine

SUMMER HEAT and SUN RISKS

for
PATIENTS TAKING
PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATIONS



Antipsychotic Medications Affect Body Heat Regulation

Antipsychotic medications may impair the body's ability to regulate its own temperature. During hot and humid weather, individuals taking major tranquilizers are at risk of developing excessive body temperature (or hyperthermia), which can be fatal. Individuals with chronic medical conditions are especially vulnerable (e.g., heart and pulmonary disease, diabetes, alcoholism, etc.)

Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related condition. It is most likely to occur in people who are involved in outdoor physical activity during heat waves.

Heat stroke is a more serious condition of dehydration and salt depletion which occurs mostly during heat waves and can be life threatening.

Lithium

Patients taking Lithium need to be careful during hot weather. Because Lithium is a salt, if you lose a lot of fluid quickly through perspiration in hot weather, your lithium level may rise quickly. Signs of lithium toxicity (level too high) include dizziness, unsteadiness, tremor, slurred speech, lethargy, and confusion. Be sure you keep hydrated in hot weather and go indoors to cool down. If you think you have signs of lithium toxicity call a doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can occur in both active and sedentary people. It happens suddenly and may be quite brief. **A doctor should be called.** Recovery may be spontaneous, or intravenous fluids may be needed to prevent unconsciousness.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- * Irritability or change in behavior
- * Low or normal temperature
- * Slightly low blood pressure
- * Rapid, full pulse and heartbeat
- * Cold, pale skin (may be ashen gray)
- * Profuse perspiration
- * Dizziness, headache, and weakness
- * Nausea, vomiting
- * Cramps in the abdominal area or in the extremities

Treatment

If a person displays symptoms of heat exhaustion, he or she should be:

- * Moved to a cooler place as soon as possible
- * Given water or other liquids immediately (there is no need for salt)
- * Encouraged to rest for a short period

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke, the most serious heat illness, occurs mostly during heat waves and, if left untreated, can lead to death. Individuals with chronic illness are most vulnerable to heat stroke.

Symptoms of heat stroke include:

- * Agitation, confusion, seizures, lethargy, or coma (all may be first symptoms)
- * High body temperature (105°F or above)
- * High blood pressure initially (shock may follow, resulting in low blood pressure)
- * Rapid pulse and heartbeat
- * Rapid, shallow breathing if the person is moving about; slow and deep breathing if the person is still
- * Hot, dry, flushed skin

Treatment

As soon as you recognize the signs of heat stroke, take immediate action:

- * Call a physician immediately
- * Loosen or remove outer layers of individual's clothing
- * Immerse individual in ice water or try to bring down body temperature with cold compresses or a cold water shower
- * Replace fluids and sodium **only** under medical orders