

**First Aid
Backcountry Camping
Heat Injuries**

Step 1: Identify the type of heat injury

Heat cramps symptoms.

- (1) Muscle cramps of the arms, legs, or abdomen.
- (2) Excessive sweating.
- (3) Thirst.

Heat exhaustion symptoms. (The first five occur often. The others occur sometimes.)

- (1) Profuse sweating with pale, moist, cool skin.
- (2) Headache.
- (3) Weakness.
- (4) Dizziness.
- (5) Loss of appetite.
- (6) Heat cramps.
- (7) Nausea, with or without vomiting.
- (8) Urge to defecate.
- (9) Chills.
- (10) Rapid breathing.
- (11) Tingling of the hands and/or feet.
- (12) Confusion.

Heatstroke symptoms.

- (1) Flushed, hot, dry skin.
- (2) Headache.
- (3) Dizziness.
- (4) Nausea.
- (5) Confusion.
- (6) Weakness.
- (7) Loss of consciousness.
- (8) Seizures.
- (9) Weak and rapid pulse and breathing.

Step 2: Provide the proper first aid for the heat injury.

Heat cramps.

- (1) Move the casualty to a cool or shady area or improvise shade.
- (2) Loosen the casualty's clothing.
- (3) Have the casualty slowly drink at least one canteen of cool water.
- (4) Seek medical aid if the cramps continue.

Heat exhaustion.

- (1) Move the casualty to a cool or shady area or improvise shade.
- (2) Loosen or remove the casualty's clothing and boots.
- (3) Pour water on the casualty and fan them.
- (4) Have the casualty slowly drink at least one canteen of cool water.
- (5) Elevate the casualty's legs.
- (6) Monitor the casualty until the symptoms are gone or medical aid arrives.

NOTE: If possible, the casualty should not participate in strenuous activity for the rest of the day.

Heatstroke.

WARNING: Heatstroke is a medical emergency that may result in death if treatment is delayed. Start cooling measures immediately and continue while waiting for transportation and during evacuation.

- (1) Move the casualty to a cool or shady area or improvise shade.
- (2) Loosen or remove the casualty's clothing.
- (3) Spray or pour water on the casualty and fan them.
- (4) Massage the casualty's arms and legs.
- (5) Elevate the casualty's legs.
- (6) If the casualty is conscious, have him slowly drink at least one canteen (1L) of cool water.

NOTE: Watch the casualty for changes in condition and continue care

Other Considerations:

- Wear sunglasses
 - These sunglasses will prevent snow blindness in the bright sun
- Keep your mouth closed
 - This will prevent moisture from escaping into the air from your mouth
- Keep your arms and legs covered as well as your head and neck
 - Wearing a full brimmed hat as well as some sort of neck covering will prevent sunburn as well as other heat related injuries. Sweat evaporates very quickly in a desert climate which in turn hinders the body's ability to cool itself.
- Drink plenty of water (cool water if possible)
 - This will prevent most of the heat related injuries stated above. Drinking water throughout the day by utilizing a camelbak or water bottle will prevent the body from becoming dehydrated. Drink before you get thirsty and make sure to replenish your body's electrolytes. Average water consumption per day is around one gallon per individual.