

"Heat Exhaustion"

The majority of the body is made up of water which comprises up to 75% of the body's weight.

Most of the water is found within the cells of the body (intracellular space). The rest is found in the extra-cellular space, which consists of the blood vessels (intravascular space) and the spaces between cells (interstitial space).

Dehydration occurs when the amount of water leaving the body is greater than the amount being taken in.

The body is very dynamic and always changing.

This is especially true with water levels in the body.

We lose water routinely when:

- we breathe and humidified air leaves the body;
- we sweat to cool the body; and
- we urinate or have a bowel movement to rid the body of waste products.

The body can lose significant amounts of water when it tries to cool itself by sweating.

Whether the body is hot because of the environment (for example, working in a warm environment), intense exercising in a hot environment, or because a fever is present due to an infection; the body uses a significant amount of water in the form of sweat to cool itself.

Depending upon weather conditions, a brisk walk will generate up to 16 ounces of sweat (one pound of water).

Excessive heat causes accidents in many ways.

It becomes more difficult to concentrate on the job, you sweat, you get tired and nervous, and begin making errors in judgment.

When the temperature exceeds 90° F, everyone needs to be aware of the danger signs.

How to prevent heat exhaustion:

- Avoid consuming alcohol and ice water while working.
- Drink plenty of cool fluids; citrus or fruit juices work best.
- Avoid heavy, fatty-type foods.
- Wear light, loose clothing.
- Avoid fatigue; get plenty of rest.
- Replace lost body salts.
- See a doctor if you are not feeling well. How to recognize heat exhaustion:
- A person is dazed, staggers or becomes dizzy.
- There is a feeling of nausea or vomiting; the person also can feel chilly.
- Their face looks pale.
- There is a weak pulse and body temperature is below normal.
- A person is lying out unconscious.

What to do:

- Call for emergency medical assistance.
- Keep the victim lying down with their head lower than their feet.
- Loosen the victim's clothing.
- Keep the victim warm. (One of the results is the person feels chilly.)
- Give fluids if possible. Avoid ice water and alcohol. Salt solutions are best.

Remember: In heat exhaustion the body is reacting to a life threatening situation.

Do not take chances. Should you begin to feel ill, take a break and drink some cool (not ice) water or something else other than an alcoholic beverage.

Heat exhaustion frequently causes a lack of consciousness; in our business, that can lead to a serious injury.