Heat Illness

Heat exhaustion starts slowly and if not quickly treated can progress to heatstroke. In heatstroke, a child's temperature reaches 105°F (40.5°C) or higher. Heatstroke requires immediate emergency medical care and can be fatal.

Signs and Symptoms

Of heat exhaustion:
- increased thirst
- weakness
- fainting
- muscle cramps
- nausea and vomiting
- irritability

Of heatstroke:
- severe headache
- weakness, dizziness
- confusion
- rapid breathing and heartbeat
- loss of consciousness leading to coma
- headache
- increased sweating
- cool, clammy skin
- elevation of body temperature to less than 105°F (40.5°C)

What to Do:

For a child with symptoms of heatstroke, seek emergency medical care immediately. In cases of heat exhaustion or while awaiting help for a child with possible heatstroke:

- Bring the child indoors or into the shade immediately.
- Undress the child.
- Have the child lie down; elevate feet slightly.
- If the child is alert, place in cool bath water. If outside, spray the child with mist from a garden hose.
- If the child is alert and coherent, give frequent sips of cool, clear fluids.
- If the child is vomiting, turn onto his or her side to prevent choking.

Think Prevention!

- Teach kids to always drink plenty of fluids before and during any activity in hot, sunny weather – even if they aren't thirsty.
- Make sure kids wear light-colored, loose clothing.
- Do not have your child participate in heavy activity outdoors during the hottest hours of the day.
- Teach kids to come indoors immediately whenever they feel overheated.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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