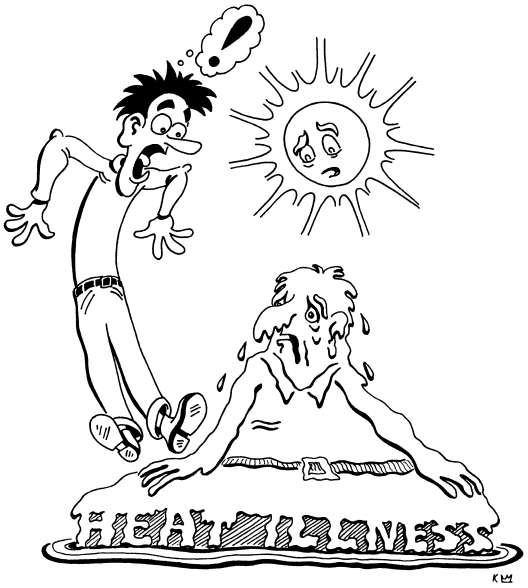
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Environmental Health & Safety
Safety Alert

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE HEAT

With the increase in temperature, the possibility of suffering from heat related illnesses increases. Four factors affect the amount of stress you will experience in a hot environment. These are humidity, temperature, air velocity and radiant heat. The following tips should be followed to control these factors and reduce the effects of heat on the body.



Acclimatization It takes the body 3 to 5 days to get adjusted to the heat. Gradually increase the pace and effort over several days when working during the first several days of hot weather.

Work Scheduling Tasks requiring the heaviest workload or the most personal protective equipment (PPE) should be scheduled for the cooler parts of the day. During times of extreme heat, work/rest cycles should be used. This may mean taking a 15-minute or more break every hour to give the body time to cool down.

Fluid Intake Enough water or electrolyte replacement fluid should be consumed so your weight stays constant. Any weight lost due to sweating will put you in a deficit for the next workday. You should drink 8 oz. of fluids every 20 minutes. If you wait until you are thirsty to drink, you are not drinking enough. Caffeine and alcohol dehydrate the body. Your consumption of these beverages should be minimized during periods of extreme heat.

Engineering Controls Hot indoor locations may be able to control the heat by ventilation. Local exhaust can be used at the point of high heat production or fans can be used to increase the airflow. In outdoor locations, breaks should be taken in shaded areas. If shade is not normally available it should be created with tarps or canopies.

Signs and Symptoms You should know the signs and symptoms of heat illnesses. These include fatigue, dizziness, severe thirst, profuse sweating or dry, clammy skin. If you experience any of these symptoms you should inform your supervisor and seek immediate relief from the heat.

For More Information Environmental Health and Safety (392-1591) can conduct heat stress monitoring for your indoor work locations. EH&S has videos for loan and can assist with training.

UF EH&S, PO Box 112190, Gainesville, FL, 32611
http://www.ehs.ufl.edu
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