

Each summer, Mississippians will experience the effects of the hot weather. Heat can kill by taxing the human body beyond its abilities. In one of the most disastrous periods of extreme heat in the United States in 1980, more than 1,250 people died from the heat. And when high humidity combines with high heat, the effect can be even more pronounced. Humans dissipate body heat by varying the rate and depth of blood circulation, by losing water through the skin and sweat glands and by panting when blood is heated above 98.6 degrees. Sweating alone does nothing to cool the body, unless the water is removed by evaporation. High relative humidity slows down evaporation. Studies have shown that -other things being equal – the severity of heat disorders tends to increase with age. Extreme heat can overtax a person's ability to cool themselves through perspiration and evaporation. Overexposure to heat can occur from working or exercising too long or too much in hot conditions. The elderly and those in poor health and/or physical condition are at higher risk. Sunburn, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke are all risks of extreme heat.

HEAT SAFETY RULES

1. Slow down. Strenuous activities should be reduced, eliminated or rescheduled to the coolest time of the day.
2. Lightweight, light -colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight and helps your body maintain normal temperatures.
3. Avoid foods like proteins that increase metabolic heat production and also increase water loss.
4. Drink plenty of water or other non-alcoholic fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty. Your body needs water to keep cool.

5. Do not take salt tablets unless specified by a physician. Persons on salt restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.
6. Spend more time in air-conditioned places.
7. Don't get too much sun. Sunburn makes the job of heat dissipation that much more difficult.