



GBCA SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK

HEAT-RELATED STRESS AND ILLNESS

Hot summer months pose special hazards for outdoor workers. Construction workers are prone to heat stress in various high temperature settings, such as on rooftops, or in open excavation sites which may lack air movement. Heat-related illness may initially manifest itself as a rash or cramps, but can quickly escalate to heat exhaustion and heat stroke if simple preventative measures are not followed.

What is Heat Stress?

- Heat stress occurs when the body is unable to cool itself by sweating.
- Heat stress can lead to heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion:

- Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting
- Weakness and moist skin
- Mood changes, irritability, confusion
- Nausea, vomiting

Symptoms of Heat Stroke:

- Dry, hot skin with no sweating
- Mental confusion or loss of consciousness
- Seizures or convulsions
- Note: Heat stroke can be fatal

Preventing Heat-Related Stress and Illness:

- Know the symptoms of heat-related illnesses
- Block out sun or other heat sources
- Use fans or air conditioning units
- In high heat, drink 1 cup of water every 15 minutes
- Wear lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothes
- Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals
- Wear sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher and reapply every 2 hours

Treating Heat-Related Stress and Illness:

- If a worker exhibits signs of heat stress or a heat illness, **call 911 and seek medical attention immediately.**

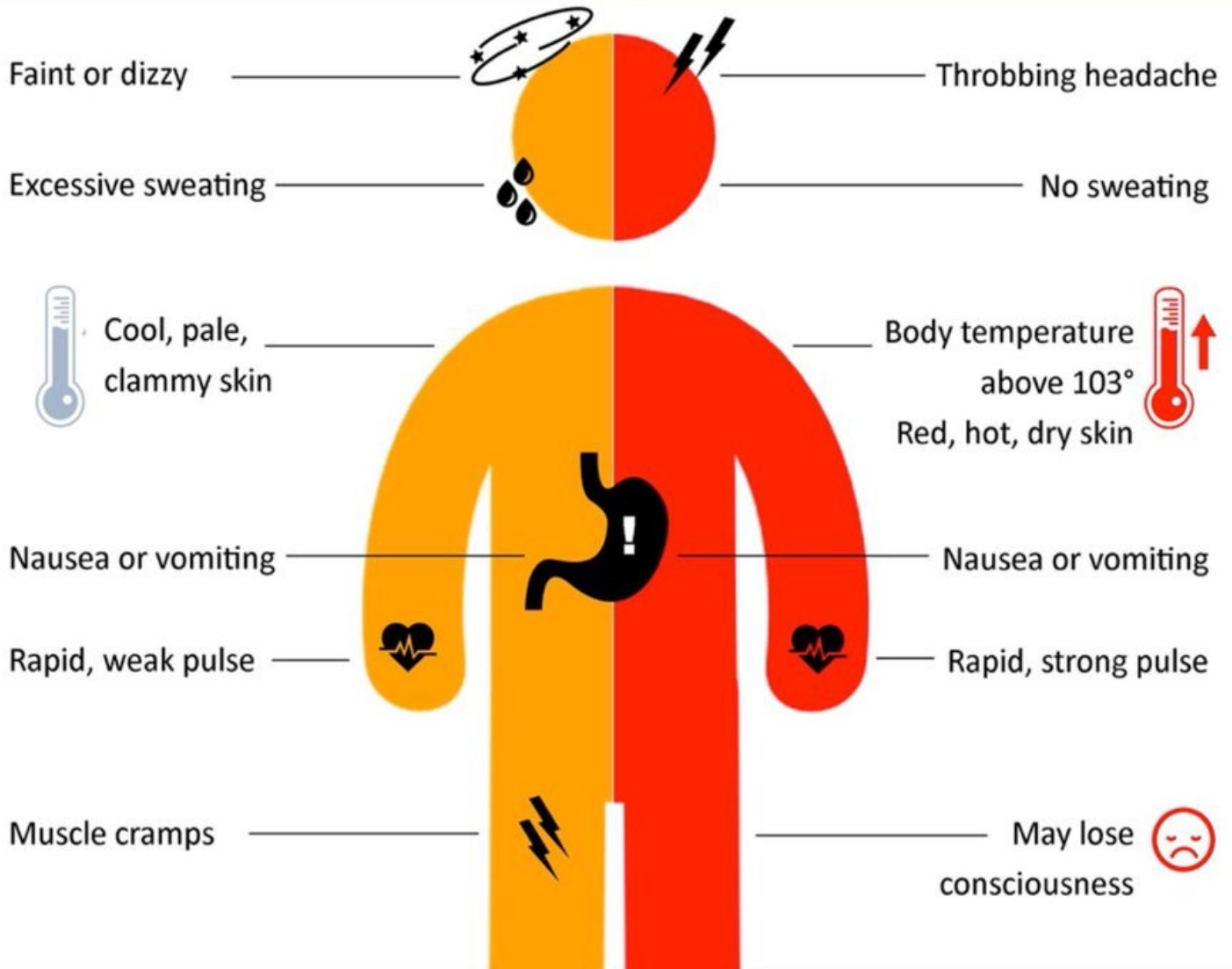
While Waiting for Emergency Response Teams:

- Move worker to a cool, shaded area
- Loosen or remove heavy clothing
- Provide cool drinking water
- Fan and mist person with water

HEAT EXHAUSTION

OR

HEAT STROKE



- Get to a cooler, air conditioned place
- Drink water if fully conscious
- Take a cool shower or use cold compresses

CALL 9-1-1

- Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives



Image Credit: National Weather Service