

SAFETY

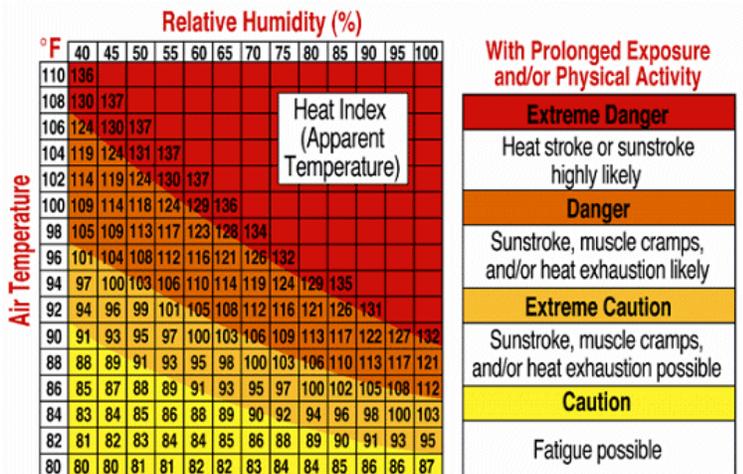
TIP OF THE MONTH

PROTECTING YOURSELF DURING SUMMER HEAT

High temperatures and humidity stress the body's ability to cool itself, and heat illness becomes a special concern during hot weather. There are three major forms of heat illnesses: **heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke**, with heat stroke being a life threatening condition.

Heat Cramps are muscle spasms which usually affect the arms, legs, or stomach and frequently occur until sometime later after work, at night, or when relaxing. To prevent them, drink electrolyte solutions such as gatorade during the day and try eating more fruits like bananas.

Heat Exhaustion occurs when the body's internal air-conditioning system is overworked. Symptoms include: headache, heavy sweating, intense thirst, dizziness, fatigue, loss of coordination, nausea, impaired judgment, loss of appetite, hyperventilation, tingling in hands or feet, anxiety, cool moist skin, weak and rapid pulse (120-200), and low to normal blood



pressure. Somebody suffering these symptoms should: be moved to a cool location, lie them down with feet slightly elevated, loosen clothing, apply cool wet cloths and drink water or electrolyte drinks. Most importantly have them checked by medical personnel.

Heat Stroke occurs when the body has depleted its supply of water and salt, and the victim's body temperature rises to life threatening levels. Early symptoms include: high body temperature (103 degrees F); distinct absence of sweating (usually); hot red or flushed dry skin; rapid pulse; difficulty breathing; constricted pupils; any/all the signs of heat exhaustion. Advance symptoms may be seizure or convulsions, collapse, loss of consciousness, and a body temperature of over 108° F. It is vital to lower a heat stroke victim's body temperature: Pour water on them, fan them, or apply cold packs. During an emergency situation call RMU Public Safety 412-397-2424 when at work or call 911 when at home.

Heat illness can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions:

- ◆ Condition yourself for working in hot environments
- ◆ Drink more fluids than usual
- ◆ Don't wait until your thirsty
- ◆ Never drink alcohol, and avoid caffeinated beverages like coffee and pop
- ◆ Take a break if you notice you're getting a headache or you start feeling overheated
- ◆ Wear light weight, light colored clothing when working out in the sun
- ◆ Take advantage of fans and air-conditioners
- ◆ Get enough sleep at night

WATER • REST • SHADE



ROBERT MORRIS UNIVERSITY™

SAFETY COMMITTEE ◆ 412-397-6282 ◆ RMU.EDU/SAFETY