

Many people die each year due to heat related causes and most of the deaths are to crop workers.

Farmers often work in direct sunlight and high humidity causing heat stress. Children are at higher risk because they sweat less, produce more heat, don't adjust to heat changes quickly, and forget to take breaks.

Heat stress can produce many negative impacts on the body. Know the difference between the three heat stress illnesses listed below and how to treat them.

Heat Cramps

- ▶ Definition: temporary sodium or fluid imbalance when exposed to heavy work or exercise in high heat
- ▶ Signs: spasms in muscles, pain in arms, legs, or abdomen
- ▶ Treatment: stop activity, rest in shaded area, apply firm pressure or massage cramped muscle, sip cool water

Heat Exhaustion

- ▶ Definition: decrease in body water or blood volume with an excess of body salts; perspiration exceeds water intake; gradual onset
- ▶ Signs: pale, cool, or flushed skin, headache, sweaty/clammy skin, abdominal cramping, nausea/vomiting, weakness, dizziness, confusion, elevated body temperature
- ▶ Treatment: rest in shaded area, elevate legs, remove restrictive clothing, call for medical help, apply cool compresses, sip cool water, do not return to direct sun for several hours

Heat Stroke

- ▶ Definition: body loses the ability to sweat and regulate temperature making the body temperature rise rapidly
- ▶ Signs: hot/dry skin, temperature above 104°, rapid heart rate, no sweating, confusion, dizziness, slurred speech, seizures, or loss of consciousness
- ▶ Treatment: call 911 immediately, rest in shaded area, remove restrictive clothing, apply cool compresses, fan the person

When working with youth in hot settings, take these precautions:

- ▶ Provide plenty of water avoiding large amounts of sugar or caffeine
- ▶ Provide ventilation and air circulation in confined areas
- ▶ Plan work in cooler times of the day and plan for breaks
- ▶ Encourage them to wear light colored, light weight clothing
- ▶ Avoid large amounts of caffeine, sugar, or alcohol

Thirst is a sign of dehydration. Be sure to drink plenty of water while working in the heat.