

Dehydration, Heat exhaustion and stroke

The unusual high temperatures across the entire country are blistering. Please consider the temperatures and your preparedness for high heat when starting a ride. Heat exhaustion and heatstroke can happen rapidly if the signs are ignored. As the air temperature rises, the body cools itself by sweating and the evaporation of the sweat. On hot, humid days, the evaporation is slowed due to the increased moisture in the air.

Heat exhaustion happens when the body plainly gets too hot due to **hot weather** or exercise. The following are symptoms of heat exhaustion:

- Heavy sweating
- Feeling weak and/or confused
- Headache
- Fast heartbeat
- Dark-colored urine (denotes dehydration)

What should you do if you think you may be experiencing heat exhaustion? Get out of the heat as quickly as possible. Remove all unnecessary clothing. Find air conditioning if possible or at least shade. Drink water or electrolyte fluids. Do not drink caffeine or fluids containing caffeine. Take a cool shower or bath. If not possible, soak your clothing in cool water. Rest! If not feeling better within 30 minutes, contact a doctor. You could be heading into heatstroke.

What is heatstroke? Heatstroke happens when your body internal temperature reaches 104. This is what happens when heat exhaustion is not treated properly or ignored. Heatstroke can cause damage to your organs and brain. In extreme cases, it can kill you.

The following are symptoms of heatstroke:

- High fever 104 or above
- Severe headache
- Dizziness and feeling light-headed
- A flushed or red appearance to the skin

- No longer sweating
- Muscle weakness or cramping
- Nausea/vomiting
- Rapid heartbeat
- Rapid breathing
- Feeling confused, anxious or disoriented
- Seizures

If you think you or someone might be having a heatstroke call 911. Seek out air conditioning or shady place. Remove all unnecessary clothing. Try to fan air over the person while wetting skin with cool water. If available, apply ice packs to the person's armpits, groin, neck and back.

There are medications that can put you into the danger zone of heat exhaustion and heatstroke because of the way they affect the way your body reacts to heat:

- Antihistamines
- Some blood pressure and heart medications (beta-blockers and vasoconstrictors)
- Diet pills and amphetamines
- Laxatives
- Some antidepressants and antipsychotics
- Seizure medicines
- Diuretics (water pills)
- Some antibiotics

What does heat index really mean? Heat index tells you how hot it feels when the relative humidity is combined with the effects of the air temperature. When you are standing in full sunshine, the heat index value is even higher. As the chart below shows, a heat index of 90°F. or higher is dangerous.

Take care, be prepared and watch the heat index in your area.

Jan Watts
Safety Officer

NWS Heat Index

Temperature (°F)

Relative Humidity (%)

| | 80 | 82 | 84 | 86 | 88 | 90 | 92 | 94 | 96 | 98 | 100 | 102 | 104 | 106 | 108 | 110 |
|-----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 40 | 80 | 81 | 83 | 85 | 88 | 91 | 94 | 97 | 101 | 105 | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 130 | 136 |
| 45 | 80 | 82 | 84 | 87 | 89 | 93 | 96 | 100 | 104 | 109 | 114 | 119 | 124 | 130 | 137 | |
| 50 | 81 | 83 | 85 | 88 | 91 | 95 | 99 | 103 | 108 | 113 | 118 | 124 | 131 | 137 | | |
| 55 | 81 | 84 | 86 | 89 | 93 | 97 | 101 | 106 | 112 | 117 | 124 | 130 | 137 | | | |
| 60 | 82 | 84 | 88 | 91 | 95 | 100 | 105 | 110 | 116 | 123 | 129 | 137 | | | | |
| 65 | 82 | 85 | 89 | 93 | 98 | 103 | 108 | 114 | 121 | 128 | 136 | | | | | |
| 70 | 83 | 86 | 90 | 95 | 100 | 105 | 112 | 119 | 126 | 134 | | | | | | |
| 75 | 84 | 88 | 92 | 97 | 103 | 109 | 116 | 124 | 132 | | | | | | | |
| 80 | 84 | 89 | 94 | 100 | 106 | 113 | 121 | 129 | | | | | | | | |
| 85 | 85 | 90 | 96 | 102 | 110 | 117 | 126 | 135 | | | | | | | | |
| 90 | 86 | 91 | 98 | 105 | 113 | 122 | 131 | | | | | | | | | |
| 95 | 86 | 93 | 100 | 108 | 117 | 127 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 100 | 87 | 95 | 103 | 112 | 121 | 132 | | | | | | | | | | |



Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

- Caution
- Extreme Caution
- Danger
- Extreme Danger