



# BEAT THE HEAT

Frequently Asked Questions

## Heat Cramps

Heat cramps may be the first sign of heat-related illness and may lead to heat exhaustion or stroke. People who sweat a lot during strenuous activity are prone to heat cramps. This sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture. The low salt level in the muscles causes painful cramps. Heat cramps may also be a symptom of heat exhaustion. If you have heart problems seek medical attention for heat cramps. If muscle pain ensues, muscle breakdown, also known as rhabdomyolysis, may occur. This results in muscle pain, dark urine or reduced urine output and weakness. Rhabdomyolysis is often a complication of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

### Symptoms:

Painful muscle cramps and spasms, usually in the legs and abdomen are associated with heavy sweating which can occur at rest or with strenuous activity.

### How to manage it: if medical attention is not necessary, take the following steps:

- Stop all activity and sit quietly in a cool shaded place.
- Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasms.
- Drink water.
- Do not return to strenuous activity for a few hours after the cramps subside because further exertion may lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Seek medical attention for heat cramps if they do not subside in 1 hour.

