

Sunstroke

Sunstroke is a life-threatening condition in which the body's heat-regulating system fails, due to exposure to high temperatures. Sunstroke can occur when the body's mechanisms to rid itself of excess heat are overwhelmed by a very hot or humid environment, or strenuous physical activity.

People particularly susceptible to sunstroke are young children, the elderly, individuals not used to physical activity and concomitant excessive sun exposure (such as overseas visitors walking in the mountains in Africa), people suffering from certain chronic medical conditions, and those involved in certain sporting activities.

Symptoms of sunstroke include elevated body temperature; hot, dry skin; hyperventilation; mental confusion; and eventual unconsciousness. The primary treatment goal for sunstroke is to lower the elevated body temperature rapidly in a controlled fashion. Sunstroke can be prevented by drinking plenty of water and avoiding overtaxing the body in hot weather and while exercising.