

**Ergonomia** informs you that every year, high temperatures affect the health of many people, particularly older people, infants, people who work outdoors and the chronically ill. Heat can trigger exhaustion and heat stroke, and can aggravate existing conditions – such as cardiovascular, respiratory, kidney or mental diseases. The adverse health effects of hot weather are largely preventable through good public health practice, while also following the advice to protect yourself from coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

## Initial Symptoms of Heat Stroke

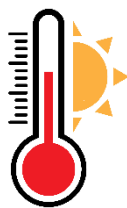
- strong headache
- atony
- weakness
- tendency to faint
- drop in blood pressure
- nausea, vomiting
- tachycardia

## Symptoms of Heatstroke Syndrome

- sudden increase in body temperature ( $> 40.5$  °C)
- red, hot and dry skin (sweating has stopped)
- dry swollen tongue
- tachycardia & shortness of breath
- intense thirst
- headache
- nausea, vomiting
- dizziness
- confusion
- inability to orient and speak clearly
- aggressive or strange behavior
- convulsions
- loss of consciousness or coma

## Vulnerable groups <sup>1</sup>:

- Elderly people
- Infants and children
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- People who are overweight or obese
- People who work or exercise intensely in a hot environment
- People with underlying health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disease, kidney disease, diabetes / obesity, mental health issues (psychiatric disorders, depression)
- People with acute illness, such as a fever infection or gastroenteritis



- People on medication. such as diuretics, hormonal. especially during periods of high ambient temperature should consult their doctor for possible dose adjustment

## First Aid

- Call emergency medical care (166)
- Move the person to a shaded, cool area
- Remove outer clothing
- Wetting patient's armpits, groin, neck, and skin with water
- Cool the body with water
- Provide to drink a small amount of water

## General precautionary instructions<sup>[1]</sup>

- Stay in air-conditioned areas. In particular, during the period in which the measures for the prevention and treatment of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic apply, the provisions of the circular for the use of air conditioning units<sup>2</sup>, in order to protect public health from the COVID-19 transmission. In this context, the need for continuous or at least systematic natural ventilation of the space through openings (windows, external doors) is emphasized, even with the parallel operation of air conditioning units
- Light and comfortable clothing with light colored clothes made of porous material, in order to facilitate the ventilation of the body and the evaporation of sweat
- Use a hat made of material that allows ventilation of the head
- Use black or dark sunglasses with protective lenses from solar radiation
- Avoid sun exposure, especially for infants and the elderly people
- Avoid strenuous physical work
- Avoid long journeys by non-air-conditioned vehicles

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/health/dieythynsh-dhmosias-ygeinhs/metadotika-kai-mh-metadotika-noshmata/c388-egkykloi/7184-prolhps-h-twn-epiptwsewn-apo-thn-emfanish-ypshlwn-thermokrasiw-n-kai-kayswna>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.moh.gov.gr/articles/health/dieythynsh-dhmosias-ygeinhs/metra-prolhps-hs-enanti-koronoioy-sars-cov-2/7108-lhps-h-metrwn-diasfalishs-ths-dhmosias-ygeias-apo-iogeneis-kai-alles-loimwks-ei-s-kata-th-xrhsh-klimatistikwn-monadwn>

# PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST HEAT STROKE IN THE PERIOD OF COVID-19

- Take warm showers during the day and placing cool pads on the head and neck
- Small in amount and light meals low in fat, with an emphasis on fruit and vegetables
- Get plenty of fluids (water and fruit juices), especially from babies and the elderly, and avoid alcohol. If sweating is high, it is recommended to take extra small doses of salt
- People with chronic illnesses should consult their treating physician, who will receive additional instructions depending on their condition as well as instructions for a possible change in the dosage of their medication
- The elderly should not be left alone but a person should be provided for their daily care
- Workplaces must have air conditioners or simple faucets, preferably a roof, and in any case natural ventilation of the premises. The same goes for institutions that care for newborns, infants, children, the elderly people and people with disabilities

## **Summarizing**<sup>3</sup>

While taking care of yourself, plan to check on family, friends and neighbors who spend much of their time alone. Vulnerable people might need assistance on hot days, and if anyone you know is at risk, help them to get advice and support while **respecting physical distancing recommendations at least 1,5 meters**

- Elderly people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease) should pay greater attention to their health as they are more vulnerable to both the effects of heat and to COVID-19 complications
- Avoid exposure to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25°C, as there is no evidence that this prevents or cures COVID-19<sup>4</sup>, and it increases your risk of sunburn and heat-related illness. COVID-19 is transmitted no matter how sunny or hot the weather is, so protect yourself and others by washing your hands regularly, coughing into your folded elbow or a tissue, and avoiding touching your face
- If you or other people feel unwell – dizzy, weak, anxious, intensely thirsty or have a headache – seek help. Move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- Be careful that you do not mistake hyperthermia for fever. If there is doubt, rest in a cool environment for at least 30 minutes and drink water to rehydrate, while avoiding sugary, alcoholic or caffeinated drinks. If the body temperature remains high, it is probably fever and you should consult a health expert. If the body temperature falls and the individual feels better after resting in a cool environment, it is probably related to heat stress
- If you have painful muscular spasms, rest immediately in a cool place and drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes. Seek help if the heat cramps last more than an hour
- Consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist, or if you suspect a fever
- If someone has hot dry skin and delirium, convulsions or is unconscious, call a doctor or an ambulance immediately



<sup>3</sup> <https://covid19.gov.gr/menoume-asfalis-symvoules-vgias-gia-ti-zesti-kata-ti-diarkia-tis-epidimias-covid-19/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.euro.who.int/en/public-health-advice-on-preventing-health-effects-of-heat>