

Preventing Heat Exhaustion

When the heat index is high, it's best to stay in an air-conditioned environment. If you must go outdoors, you can prevent heat exhaustion by taking these steps:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Use a **sunscreen** with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or more.
- Drink extra fluids. To prevent dehydration, it's generally recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water, fruit juice, or vegetable juice per day. Because heat-related illness also can result from salt depletion, it may be advisable to substitute an electrolyte-rich sports drink for water during periods of extreme heat and humidity.
- Take additional precautions when exercising or working outdoors. The general recommendation is to drink 24 ounces of fluid two hours before exercise, and consider adding another eight ounces of water or sports drink right before exercise. During exercise, you should consume another 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes even if you don't feel thirsty.

Avoid fluids containing either **caffeine** or alcohol, because both substances can make you lose more fluids and worsen heat exhaustion. If you have **epilepsy** or heart, kidney, or **liver** disease; are on fluid-restricted **diets**; or have a problem with fluid retention, check with your doctor before increasing liquid intake