

It's Hot Out There! Don't Become a Victim of Heat-related Illnesses.

By Amanda Corman, Volunteer Coordinator

The first half of the year is already complete; however, we have truly just begun summer. In typical Atlanta fashion, the city has once again proved its nickname of Hotlanta. With the heat index already reaching into the high 90s and even into the 100s, it is important to be aware of yourself as you enjoy the summer and while volunteering at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.

Heat-related illnesses include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, rhabdomyolysis, heat syncope, heat cramps, and heat rash. Anyone is susceptible to experiencing heat-related illnesses, especially if they are exposed to extreme heat or work in hot environments. Heat stroke is the most serious of the illnesses. It occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature. When heat stroke occurs, the internal body temperature can reach 106 degrees or higher within 10-15 minutes. It can lead to permanent disability or even death if emergency treatment is not received.

Symptoms

- Confusion altered mental status, slurred speech.
- Loss of consciousness (coma)
- Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating
- Seizures
- Very high body temperature
- Fatal if treatment is delayed.

Heat Exhaustion is the body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating.

Symptoms

- Headache
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Irritability
- Thirst
- Heavy sweating
- Elevated body temperature
- Decreased urine output.

It is always best to be aware of ourselves and the environment that one is volunteering or enjoying outdoor summer activities. With these risks in mind, please take some steps to help protect yourself when temperature is extremely high.

- Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully.

- Wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.
- Pace yourself and take breaks.
- Take cool showers or baths to cool down.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Never leave children or pets in cars.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.

Remember: If you think you or someone with you may be experiencing a heat-related illness, CALL 911 to provide immediate medical assistance. Kennesaw Mountain NBP greatly appreciates all the hard work that volunteers do for the park and the staff wants to ensure that you have a safe time as you enjoy giving back, even during the hot summers of the south.

For more information, please visit the CDC website on “Heat-related Illness: and “Protect Yourself from the Dangers of Extreme Heat” (<https://www.cdc.gov/>).