Prevention of Heat Illness

During periods of high temperature and humidity, there are things everyone (particularly people at high risk) should do to lessen the chances of heat illness:

* Limit your time in the sun, especially between 10am and 2pm, when the sun's rays are most intense.
* Avoid over-exertion, particularly during warmer periods of the day.
* Dress in loose fitting, light-colored clothing and a hat to minimize skin exposed to the sun.
* Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) value of 15 or higher. Apply as directed.
* Keep windows shut, and draperies, shades or blinds drawn during the heat of the day; open windows in the evening or night hours when the air outside is cooler.

* Move to cooler rooms during the heat of the day.
* Drink plenty of fluids.
* If not on a low salt diet, sports drinks or salty snacks can help replace salt lost to sweating.

Antipsychotic Medications

Trade Name	Generic Name
Abilify, Aristada	Aripiprazole
Caplyta	Lumateperone
Clozaril, Fazaclo, Versacloz	Clozapine
Fanapt	Iloperidone
Geodon	Ziprasidone
Haldol	Haloperidol
Invega	Paliperidone
Latuda	Lurasidone
Loxitane*	Loxapine
Moban*	Molindone
Navane*	Thiothixene
Prolixin*	Fluphenazine
Nuplazid	Pimavanserin
Orap	Pimozide
Mellaril*	Thioridazine
Rexulti	Brexpiprazole
Risperdal	Risperidone
Saphris	Asenapine
Seroquel	Quetiapine
Stelazine*	Trifluoperazine
Thorazine*	Chlorpromazine
Trilafon*	Perphenazine
Vraylar	Cariprazine
Zyprexa/Relprevv	Olanzapine

(*) Brand name version no longer available in the United States.

State of New Jersey DHS Department of Human Services

NJ Department of Human Services
Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

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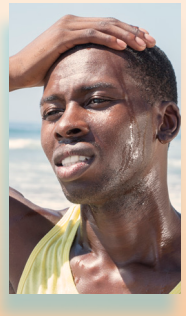
Summer Heat and Sun Risks When Taking Psychiatric Medications



State of New Jersey
Phil Murphy, *Governor*
Sheila Oliver, *Lt. Governor*

Department of Human Services
Carole Johnson, *Commissioner*

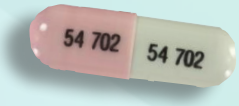
Antipsychotic Medications Affect Body Heat Regulation

Antipsychotic medications may impair the body's ability to regulate its own temperature. During hot and humid weather, individuals taking major tranquilizers are at risk of developing excessive body temperature (or hyperthermia), which can be fatal. Individuals with chronic medical conditions are especially vulnerable (e.g., heart and pulmonary disease, diabetes, alcoholism, etc.).

Heat exhaustion is the most common heat-related condition. It is most likely to occur in people who are involved in outdoor physical activity during heat waves.

Heat stroke is a more serious condition of dehydration and salt depletion which occurs mostly during heat waves and can be life threatening.

Lithium



Patients taking Lithium will also need to be careful during hot weather. Because Lithium is a salt, if you lose a lot of fluid quickly through perspiration in hot weather, your lithium level may rise quickly. Signs of lithium toxicity (level too high) include dizziness, unsteadiness, tremor, slurred speech, lethargy, and confusion. Be sure you keep hydrated in hot weather and go indoors to cool down. If you think you have signs of lithium toxicity call a doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion can occur in both active and sedentary people. It happens suddenly and may be quite brief. A doctor should be called. Recovery may be spontaneous, or intravenous fluids may be needed to prevent unconsciousness.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

* Irritability or change in behavior
* Low or normal temperature
* Slightly low blood pressure
* Rapid, full pulse and heartbeat
* Cold, pale skin (may be ashen gray)
* Profuse perspiration
* Dizziness, headache, and weakness
* Nausea, vomiting
* Cramps in the abdominal area or in the extremities

Treatment

If a person displays symptoms of heat exhaustion, he or she should be:

* Moved to a cooler place as soon as possible
* Given water or other liquids immediately (there is no need for salt)
* Stop all activity and rest for a short period

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke, the most serious heat illness, occurs mostly during heat waves and, if left untreated, can lead to death. Individuals with chronic illnesses are most vulnerable to heat stroke.

Symptoms of heat stroke include:

* Agitation, confusion, seizures, lethargy, or coma (all may be first symptoms)
* High body temperature (104ºF or above)
* High blood pressure initially (shock may follow, resulting in low blood pressure)
* Rapid pulse and heartbeat
* Rapid, shallow breathing if the person is moving about; slow and deep breathing if the person is still
* Hot, dry, flushed skin

Treatment

As soon as you recognize the signs of heat stroke, take immediate action:

* Call 911 immediately
* Loosen or remove outer layers of individual's clothing
* Move to a cool place
* Immerse individual in ice water or try to bring down body temperature with cold compresses or a cold water shower
* Use CPR, if needed
* Replace fluids and sodium only under medical orders