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## Protect Yourself from Heat Illnesses



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“Heat illnesses occur when the body cannot cool itself properly after prolonged exposure to high temperatures and humidity,” said Alexis Hill, D.O., an internal medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center (SRMC) and SRMC Primary Care – Lisbon.

“Anyone can experience a heat-related illness, though young children, older adults, people with chronic health conditions, and those working or exercising outdoors are most at risk. People who take certain medications may also be more susceptible to heat illnesses.”

Two of the most common heat-related illnesses are heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

**Heat exhaustion:** “Heat exhaustion can happen when the body becomes dehydrated in hot conditions and may cause heavy sweating; a fast, weak pulse; rapid breathing; and nausea,” Dr. Hill explained. “Most people recover by resting in a cool place and drinking plenty of water or sports drinks.”

**Heat stroke:** “Heat stroke is a more severe type of heat illness that is a life-threatening emergency. Symptoms may include red, hot and dry skin; a rapid, strong pulse; dizziness and confusion; nausea; and loss of consciousness.”

“It’s critical to seek immediate medical treatment for suspected heat stroke. Untreated, heat stroke can lead to brain damage, organ failure or death.”

With some precautions, nearly all heat-related illnesses are preventable.

### Lower your risk of heat illness by:

- Drinking plenty of water

- Avoiding caffeinated beverages and alcohol
- Wearing lightweight, loose-fitting clothing and sunscreen
- Pacing yourself and taking frequent breaks
- Limiting sun exposure during the midday hours

*Alexis Hill, D.O., Internal Medicine, sees patients ages 18 and older at SRMC Primary Care – Lisbon, located at 38506 Saltwell Road in Lisbon. Appointments with Dr. Hill can be scheduled by calling 330- 424-1404.*