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भारत सरकार
स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय
निर्माण भवन, नई दिल्ली - 110011
Government of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi - 110011

D.O No.7 (89)/2016-NRHM-I
Dated the 16 May, 2016

Dear colleague,

You are all aware that in the past month, several states have witnessed unprecedented high temperatures leading to heat strokes and heat related deaths. You are also aware that the elderly and children are particularly susceptible. This makes prevention and management of heat strokes an important and imperative need. To ensure a more universal reach of key messages related to symptoms, prevention and management of heat stroke, all frontline workers (ANM, ASHA, and AWW) need orientation on these aspects. The ASHA and AWW particularly require this, since they are positioned as key resource persons within the community.

2. The Ministry has got prepared a two pager leaflet on Prevention and Management of heat stroke in the community. This may be adapted to local context wherever necessary, and immediately translated into the local language and circulated to all PHCs. The PHC is a location for the monthly meeting of ASHA, ASHA facilitator and ANM. The state should mandate that all PHCs immediately hold the frontline worker meetings for the month of May, preferably not later than the first fortnight itself. The Frontline workers should be given a copy of this leaflet, which can be printed in the PHC itself. They should be sensitized to the contents, and encouraged to disseminate this information to the general community through the VHSNC, SHG groups, etc, and at platforms such as the VHND.

3. I would like to urge you to take this up without any loss of time so that the frontline workers are equipped to spread awareness, recognize, take immediate action and refer patients with heat stroke during this season and prevent morbidity & deaths.

May I request you to revert with action taken on the matter. I look forward to hearing from each of you.

With regards,

Yours sincerely

(Manoj Jhalani)

Encl: as above

To,

Additional Chief Secretary (Health)/ Principal Secretary/ Health Secretary – All States /UT

Copy to :

(1) MD, NHM – All States/UTs

(2) ED, NHSRC/Dr Rajani Ved , Advisor, NHSRC

The Role of Front Line Workers (ASHA/ANM/ AWW/ASHA Facilitators) in Prevention and Management of Heat Stroke

What is Heat Stroke?

Heatstroke is a form of hyperthermia or heat related illness caused by long exposure to high environmental temperature. It can also be caused by intense physical activity in hot weather.

Factors contributing to occurrence of Heat Stroke

- Exposure to hot environment for prolonged periods.
- Excessive physical activity in hot weather.
- Not drinking enough water in hot weather.
- Wearing excessive clothing in hot weather.
- Alcohol consumption causing imbalance in temperature maintenance.

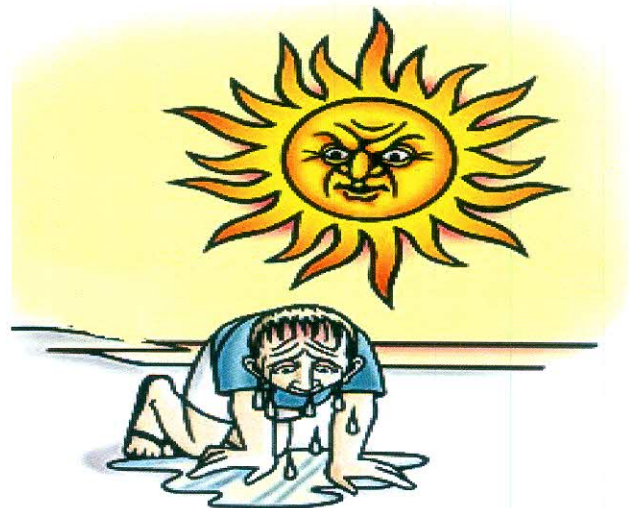
Who is at a higher risk of getting Heat Stroke?

- Newborns and Infants
- Children
- Elderly
- Individuals who work in direct sunlight for long hours. eg. laborers, farmers, road and construction workers etc.
- Those who engage in rigorous physical activity including sports eg. Athletes, Military personnel, Police.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Heat stroke occurs most commonly during the summer months of April to July. The key sign of heat stroke is a body temperature above 104 Degree Fahrenheit (40 Degree Celcius) and consumed state of mind. Other symptoms may include:

- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness and light-headedness
- Lack of sweating despite the heat
- Red, hot, and dry skin
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Nausea and vomiting, extreme lethargy
- Rapid heartbeat
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Mental confusion, disorientation,
- Unsteadiness of gait or staggering
- Seizures



- Unconsciousness

Management of Heat Stroke

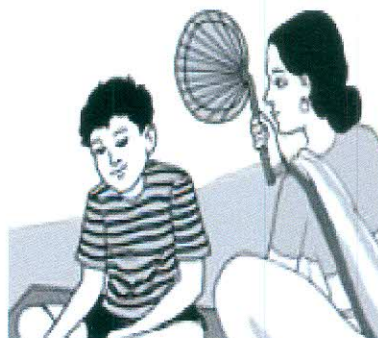
If you suspect that someone has a heat stroke, make arrangements to take the person immediately to the nearest health facility. First aid measures that you can immediately initiate **and** educate the family/community about or initiate yourself immediately are:

- Move the person to an open and well ventilated environment or a cool, shady area.
- Remove any unnecessary clothing.
- Aim to reduce the temperature to less than 101 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Use a fan over the patient while wetting his or her skin with water using a sponge or towel.
- Apply ice packs, if available, to the patient's armpits, groin, neck, and back.
- If possible, immerse the patient in a shower or tub of cool water, or an ice bath.
- **NOTE: Do not apply ice pack or immerse newborn/baby in water as it may cause hypothermia.**

Simple steps to prevent Heat Stroke:

Create awareness in your community through meetings and household visits, especially focusing on households with elderly, newborns or people having chronic illness and advise them to:

- Wear lightweight, light-colored and loose-fitting clothing.
- Keep the house well ventilated, especially the cooking area.
- Keep the doors and windows open.
- During the hottest part of the day, cover the windows with curtains, cloth, bedsheet etc.
- To prevent dehydration, drink at least eight glasses of water, fruit juice, buttermilk or other fluids daily.
- Avoid vigorous physical activities in hot and humid weather.
- Where possible, avoid going out during the hottest period of the day i.e. early and late afternoons.
- Take additional precautions when working outdoors in the field or exercising. Drink water/juice etc even not thirsty.
- Houses with tin roofs tend to get hotter. Take extra precautions in such a case.
- Avoid alcohol during this time.



Steps to prevent Heat stroke in Infants and Children

- Babies who are exclusively breast-fed may need extra breast-feeds in hot weather.
- Children above 6 months of age, who have started complementary feeding, can be given small amounts of cool, boiled water between feeds.
- Choose the coolest place in the house for babies or young children to sleep.
- Give young children (over 6 months of age) regular fluids throughout the day.

- Children should be prevented from playing outside in sun during peak hours of the day.