

Hot summer, work and drinking habits

This year's summer is characterised by extremely high temperatures for long periods of time. The Human organism gets exhausted by high temperatures, our bodies have to fight against overheating, and the outcome of it is excessive sweating.

In order to eliminate dehydration of organism (symptoms: tiredness, headache, dizziness, cramps, drop of blood pressure, fast heart rate), it is important to supply water and minerals to stay hydrated.

This is especially important for people who work outdoors in high temperatures, indoors without air condition or in workplaces where there is an additional technological source of heat.

At non-risk workplaces, where employees are not exposed to a heat source, it is enough to offer a tap water or bottled water to make them stay hydrated. The employer has an obligation by § 53 par. 1 Government decree n. 361/2007, to equip every workplace with sufficient amount of drinking water for employees and to give first aid.

During the extremely high temperatures it is suitable in addition to drinking water also drink a little amount of mineral water, to replace minerals that are lost due to sweating. Minerals are taken to the organism especially from food, so it is not advisable in high temperatures to just drink mineral water as that would bring too much strain on the kidneys. Sparkling beverages (with carbon dioxide) are not good either because drinking lots of them over acidify our organism and cause stomach aches. Sweet soft drinks are not recommended as well. Over all the amount of liquids that should be taken during extreme heat shouldn't be less than 2-3 litres per day, it also depends on the type of work that was done. The harder work is accomplished, the higher amount of drinks we need to take in.

With regards to drinking habits, except drinking water and mineral water, it is suitable to drink weak unsweetened tea, non-alcoholic beer and also fruit juices diluted with water.

At workplaces where there is a source of technological heat and everywhere where work is classified to third category of heat load, employers have a duty according to §8 Government decree n. 361/2007 to supply for employees protective beverages in amount of 70% lost liquids by sweating. The type of protective beverage is supply by the type of work, from light mineralized water (tap water as well) for less strenuous work, to middle mineralized water for work with high significant physical strain.

When you work at outdoors, it is good to have (except water) sunglasses and headgear. Important is the organization of work, if possible, it is good to change from working outside to working inside, or if is not possible give employees a safety break.

Recently it is popular at the workplaces to use air-conditioning, but even air-conditioning may cause health problems, when not used properly. It is important to make sure that the stream of cold air is not directly on the employee and do not cool the room for more than 8°C in opposition to the temperature outside.

