

To Help You Stay in the Game and Prevent Heat Illnesses

What is Heat Illness?

Heat Illnesses are a wide range of disorders that are caused by exposure to heat.

Most Common Types of Heat Illness

Dehydration - occurs when body fluids are depleted due to sweating. This often happens when the athlete has not properly hydrated prior to exercise.

Heat Cramps - muscle spasms that occur when large amounts of sodium and water have been lost due to sweating. This usually happens after prolonged exercise and is most common in calves, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

Heat Exhaustion - sets in when the athlete continues to be physically active after struggling with the effects of dehydration.

Exertional Heat Stroke - occurs when the body produces too much heat to be released. Exertional heat stroke causes a rapid increase in core body temperature, usually above 104 degrees and can lead to serious injury or death if untreated.

Signs and Symptoms

- Thirst
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness
- Dark urine color
- Cramps
- Irritability
- Fatigue
- Feeling slower than normal
- Nausea/Upset Stomach
- Fainting
- Profuse sweating/pale skin

Treatment

- Watch for signs of heat illness in your athletes. Take their complaints seriously!
- Begin to replace fluids through water and sports drinks (Gatorade/PowerAde).
- Move to a shaded or air conditioned space
- If cramping, light stretching and massage can alleviate symptoms.
- Begin to cool with cold towels, ice packs, and immersion tub if necessary and available

How to Prevent Heat Illness

- Use an acclimatization period to gradually increase activity in intensity and duration.
- Drink Water and Sports Drinks such as Gatorade or PowerAde before, during and after exercise.
- Take rest and water breaks frequently during exercise in the heat.
- Exercise in the early morning or evening hours when it is cooler.
- Wear lighter colored clothing if possible during exercise.
- Do not participate in exercise if you are already sick and exhibit the following symptoms: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or extreme fatigue.

References:

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