



Heat Illness

Spectrum of symptoms ranging from heat cramps to heat exhaustion to heatstroke

- Heat Cramps – involuntary, painful contractions of skeletal muscle typically occurring during or after prolonged exercise
- Heat Exhaustion – body's response to loss of excess water and salt through sweat; may occur after several days of exposure to high temperatures
- Heat Stroke – rise in core temperature with physical and neurological symptoms, medical emergency

Risk factors include obesity, dehydration, fatigue, recent episode of heat illness, fever, impermeable garments, lack of acclimatization, medications or supplements (antihistamines, ephedra, caffeine, diuretics)

Signs & Symptoms

Heat Stroke

- Call 911 immediately
- Constricted pupils
- Hot, dry or damp, red skin

Care:

- Immediately cool the athlete quickly, cold compresses or ice packs can be placed on specific points (refer to attached illustration for Quick Cooldown)
- Immerse in cool water or wrap in wet sheets
- Treat while waiting for EMS
- If unconscious or lethargic, give nothing by mouth

Heat Exhaustion

- Pulse & breathing may be very fast or slow
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Profuse sweating
- Headache
- Cramps
- Skin may be cool, moist, blue or pale
- Dilated pupils

Care:

- Immediately cool athlete with ice packs and fanning (refer to attached illustration for Quick Cooldown)
- Give cool water by mouth, only if conscious and not lethargic
- Consider referral to ER or calling EMS

Heat Cramps

- Usually occur in abdomen, legs, back
- Get victim in cool area or fan
- Give ½ glass of cool water every 15 minutes

Prevention

- Acclimatization – first 4 to 5 days
- Prehydration & Hydration – drink 16 oz of water or sports drink 2 hours before activity, if no urination repeat 15 minutes before activity; during exercise drink 5-10 oz every 20 minutes; after exercise replace each pound of weight lost with 32oz of fluid.
- Clothing – light colored, lightweight, sun protection
- Medications – stop antihistamines, stop ephedra containing products