

TRAINER'S CORNER

Heat Safety Tips for a Safe Summer



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As we enter summer in South Florida we are blessed with blue skies, white sandy beaches, and long hours of sun exposure. This beautiful weather allows parents the opportunity to enroll their children in summer camp programs or summer sports leagues. Although participating in sports and staying active during the summer is important and frequently recommended, it is important to educate ourselves in environmental safety. The three most prevalent heat related illnesses in hot humid environments such as South Florida are heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. These cases are both preventable and treatable when recognized in a timely fashion.

Heat Cramps are typically the first sign of dehydration. Individuals will experience intense muscular pain or muscle contractions which will not ease. This may occur in the calves, hamstrings, or abdominal area. When this occurs, rehydration with water or sports drink and light stretching / massage is highly recommended. If cramping persists individuals should be removed from competition.

Heat Exhaustion symptoms include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of coordination, profuse sweating, pale clammy skin, and/ or possible fainting. This person should be removed from competition and brought to a shaded cool area. The legs should be elevated above the heart level and rehydration should be initiated. If symptoms persist or the athlete loses consciousness, 911 should be activated.

Heat Stroke is a MEDICAL EMERGENCY and immediate attention to the individual is warranted. Signs and symptoms of heat stroke are similar to heat exhaustion except the athlete is unable to sweat due to increased core body temperature. Individuals suffering from heat stroke tend to have red, hot, and dry skin. Whole body cooling is advised and 911 should be activated immediately.

It is important to consider acclimatization and hydration when preventing the above heat related injuries. **Acclimatization** is the period of time approximately 10 to 14 days prior to competition that one should dedicate to enhance the bodies ability to adapt to a new environment. This is the time when parents, coaches, and certified athletic trainers should modify intensity, duration, and rest periods according to the environmental factors. Special consideration should also take place for high risk individuals. Athletes with a prior history of heat related injury and obesity are high risk individuals. Hydration needs to takes place days before competition, and is not sufficient on the day of competition. A simple and recommended way to monitor hydration is to utilize a weight chart to record pre and post - participation weight. For every pound lost it is recommended to drink 16 ounces of water or sports drink. Prior to the next activity the individual should have their pre- participation weight restored. It is also recommended to post a hydration urine chart. The darker the color of the urine, the more dehydrated the individual. For more information on heat related illnesses and hydration tips, log on to our web site at U18sportsmedicine.com or find us on Facebook under U18 Sports Medicine.



TIP:

WHEN SUFFERING FROM HEAT OR MUSCLE CRAMPS, TRY TO GENTLY STRETCH AND MASSAGE THE MUSCLE. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE ATHLETE MUST BE REHYDRATED WITH WATER OR DILUTED SPORTS DRINKS!