

Heat-Related Illness

Heat-related illness is one of the leading causes of death in athletics. However, heat-related illness is largely preventable. During exercise the body's temperature increases. Then in turn, the body perspires to cool off. When one perspires, one loses body fluid and electrolytes. If the fluid and electrolytes are not replenished, the risk for heat-related illness increases.



What are some symptoms of heat illness?

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Weakness
- Tiredness

More serious symptoms include difficulty breathing, muscle cramps, nausea, tingling in the extremities, and change in mental status. If these symptoms develop, it means that the body temperature is getting to be dangerously high and could be possibly life-threatening. Thus, rapid cooling must be done immediately.

Hydration Tips

- Drink 16 oz of water or sports drink one hour before exercise
- Drink 4-8 oz every 15-20 minutes of exercise
- For exercise lasting less than an hour, drink water
- For exercise lasting more than an hour, drink a sports drink
- Weigh yourself before and after exercise, for every 2 lbs lost — drink 1.5 liters of fluid

How can heat-related illness be prevented?

- Acclimate to heat over time. About 10-14 days before training camp, exercise in the heat for 10 minutes, then increase by another 10 minutes every 2 days
- Go into practice fully hydrated and follow above recommendations
- Wear light colored, loose fitting clothing
- Have a certified athletic trainer on site to properly monitor players during practices and games
- If a player starts to display signs of heat illness, pull the player from activity immediately and have them evaluated by medical personnel