

HOW TO HELP YOU AND YOUR KIDS BEAT THE HEAT

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SPORTS MEDICINE
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With the summer months right around the corner, warmer, more humid conditions are sure to follow. Summer youth sports leagues will be starting soon, making this a good time to review the types of heat-related illness, first-aid, and methods for prevention of these common medical conditions.

How to Recognize Heat-Related Illness

There are several types and degrees of seriousness of heat-related illness. Each can be differentiated by various signs and symptoms:

- Heat Cramps: painful cramping of the muscles of the limbs and abdomen caused by excessive sweating (due to the depletion of salt and water from the body)
- Heat Syncope: weakness, fatigue, and fainting due to loss of salt and water
- Heat Exhaustion: cool and pale skin, headache, nausea, chills, weakness, unsteadiness, dizziness, rapid pulse, excessive thirst, and muscle cramps
- Heat Stroke: hot and dry skin, incoherent speech, disorientation, unconsciousness or coma, nausea, seizures, and rapid or irregular pulse

Heat stroke is the failure of the body's heat-control mechanism, which can cause other organ systems to shut down and cause a life-threatening emergency.

Prevention for GOBA cyclists:

1. Drink frequently. Thirst is a late cue for hydrating. "Drink before you're thirsty." For really hot and humid days, you should be drinking a water bottle every 30-60 mins. Make sure that you mix in some Gatorade or other electrolyte drinks between every 2nd to 3rd water bottle to replace sodium and potassium lost in sweat and urine. If you're prone to cramping, think about adding something like Gatorade Endurance, V8 juice, pickle juice or just eating some salty foods at the rest stops.
2. Wear wicking clothing. This facilitates sweat evaporation which is a good cooling mechanism. If you must cover up arms and legs to protect from UV light, then pick something that breathes NOT COTTON if you can help it.
3. Start early before the heat of the day. Try to be at your destination and set up in some shade before noon.
4. Seek shade and rest as often as needed. Remember, it's GOBA, not the TDF!

5. For parents pulling kids in buggies .remember that buggies can become little ovens, especially with the plastic covers attached. Our little passenger's bodies aren't as efficient at cooling as we are and they don't get the cooling benefit of the breeze since they are behind us. So, check on them frequently, allow them free access to water while in the buggy and give them a couple of squirt guns to douse themselves (and me when we pass each other!)
6. Finally, get caught up for the next day. Despite our best efforts, on extremely hot days, most of us finish "a little behind" still when it comes to hydrations, so make sure you take in plenty of the right fluids (not alcohol, sorry!) to be ready for the next day.

Guide for Activities in Hot, Humid Weather

Temperature Humidity Recommendation

80°-90° F < 70% Monitor overweight and/or out of shape athletes for signs of heat illness.

80°-90° F > 70% Athletes should take a 10 minute rest every hour.

90°-100° F < 70% Change wet t-shirts for dry ones. Keep all athletes under constant and careful supervision.

90°-100° F > 70% Practice should be altered (shortened or discontinued).

Consult your primary care physician for more serious injuries that do not respond to basic first aid. As an added resource, the staff at Children's Sports Medicine is available to diagnose and treat sports-related injuries for youth or adolescent athletes. To make an appointment, call 614-355-6000.