

HEAT ILLNESS / PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Early fall football and cross country are conducted in very hot and humid weather condition in Texas. Due to the equipment and uniform needed in football, most of the heat problems have been associated with football. During hot weather conditions, the athlete is subjected to the following: Heat Syncope / Heat exhaustion / Heatstroke.

It is believed that the above-mentioned heat stress problems can be controlled provided certain precautions are taken. The following practices and precautions are recommended:

1. Each athlete must have a physical exam along with a medical history.
2. Lack of physical fitness impairs the performance of the athlete and coaches should know the physical condition of their athletes and set a practice schedule accordingly.
3. Acclimatization is the process of becoming adjusted to the heat and it is essential to provide for **gradual acclimatization** to the hot weather.
4. Water must be available in unlimited quantities and drinking ample water before practices or games has been found to aid performance in the heat. Attention must be directed to replacing water and fluid replacement is essential.
5. Establishing WBGT guidelines that dictate modifications in activity (work: rest ratios, hydration breaks, equipment worn and length of practice) at a given WBGT temperatures play a huge factor in helping to prevent Heatstroke.
6. Observe athletes carefully for signs of trouble dealing with the heat. Some trouble signs are nausea, incoherence, fatigue, weakness, vomiting, cramps, weak rapid pulse, visual disturbance and unsteadiness.
7. Know what to do in case of emergency and have your emergency action plan written with copies to all your staff. Be familiar with immediate first aid practices and prearranged procedures for obtaining medical care, including ambulance service.

HEAT SROKE- This is a medical emergency. ANY DELAY COULD BE FATAL

- Follow these steps to initiate emergency treatment
- Remove equipment and excess clothing
- Cool the athlete as quickly as possible within 30 minutes via whole body ice water immersion. Agitate the water and add ice throughout the cooling process.
- Maintain airway, breathing and circulation
- After cooling has been initiated, activate emergency medical system by calling 911.
- Monitor vital signs such as rectal temperature, heart rate, respiration rate and blood pressure.
- **Rectal thermometers** may be used by our district Athletic Trainers to diagnose and confirm that the athletes cooling temperature has reached 101-102 degree before athletes is transported.
- Exertional heat stroke has a 100% survival rate when immediate cooling within 10 minutes of collapse.