



Heat Related Injuries

The death of NFL player Korey Stringer in 2000 has taught us some powerful, if saddening, lessons: Preventing heat stroke isn't a matter of physical ability, stamina, youth or willpower. Even the best athletes, who are at the pinnacle of their career, in the best possible physical condition, can have a hard time seeing the danger signs. Once the body begins to succumb to overheating, there may be nothing within our control we can do.

PREVENTION, however, is very much within our control. Here are some simple steps to take against heat stroke:

- Don't assume that brief workouts are less risky than extended ones. According to one study, 40 percent of heat stroke cases occurred during short workouts.
- "Pre-hydrate" your body by drinking a pint of fluid 15 to 30 minutes before exercising outdoors.

If you are exercising for a long stretch of time, drink a half-pint to a pint of fluid every half hour. This will need to be increased as the temperatures rise.

Heat related injuries are almost entirely preventable by the coach. During excessive hot weather, drink plenty of water and take several breaks (in shade if possible). Pay close attention to the signs and symptoms of any heat related injury.

Heat Cramps: Mild forms of heat stress. Symptoms include muscle twitching and cramps in the legs, arms and abdomen. Drink plenty of fluids and eat slightly salted foods.

Heat Exhaustion: Serious in nature, can lead to heatstroke. Shown by excessive thirst, slow pulse, pale and cool skin, weakness, fatigue, profuse sweating, lack of coordination and mental dullness. Remove from activity immediately and place in cool environment in reclining position with feet elevated. If the person faints, place head on floor or ground and call emergency help.

Heatstroke: Very serious and can lead to death. Shown by hot, red, dry skin, little or no sweating, a rapid pulse and a very high temperature. Remove from activity and pack person in ice or very cold water and immediately call for help. Check body temperature every 10 minutes so the body temperature does not fall below 100* F, which will cause hypothermia.

HYPERTHERMIA: INCREASE in temperature HEAT

HYPOTHERMIA: DECREASE in temperature COLD