



HEAT GUIDELINES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Ottawa Recreation Commission has implemented the following guidelines to deal with extreme heat at all outdoor programs. It is designed to provide participants with a standard for safe play in situations of extreme heat.

Our goal is to provide an easy to follow guide to a preventable problem: heat-related illnesses, dehydration, cramping, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke.

In general, young people are at higher risk for developing heat illness than adults. Children absorb heat faster than adults, they don't sweat as much (sweat helps the body cool), and often they don't "want" to drink fluids during exercise. These factors add up to a higher risk of heat illness than many adults. Fortunately there are a number of simple steps that can greatly reduce the risk of problems when playing in the heat.

Signs of Dehydration and Heat Illness

Most people will first start to show signs of heat-related illness through dehydration. If left untreated, dehydration can progress to more severe problems such as muscle cramping, and heat exhaustion. Rather than providing you a medical textbook definition of heat illness, here are some signs of dehydration to look for:

- * Decreased performance
- * Fatigue
- * Weakness
- * Irritability
- * Nausea
- * Headache
- * Light-headedness
- * Difficulty paying attention or following directions

If any of the above signs of dehydration do happen, follow these simple steps:

- * Remove the person from the heat and let them rest in a cool, shaded place.
- * Provide a sport drink and or water (no caffeine).
- * If the person doesn't start to feel better relatively soon (15-30 minutes), seek medical help.

Preventing Dehydration and Heat Illness

There are a number of steps that can reduce the chances of heat illness developing. Acclimatization can make a big difference in improving a person's ability to compete safely and successfully in hot weather.

During exposure to excessive heat, wear light-colored and lightweight materials. Here are some tips on what to drink, when to drink, and how much to drink to promote good hydration:

- * Sports drinks are an excellent choice for hydration. The electrolytes (like sodium chloride) will stimulate thirst, help the body hold onto fluid, reduce the chance of cramping, and possibly improve performance.
- * Avoid any drinks with caffeine or high fructose corn syrup, and no carbonated sodas.
- * You should have 12-16 ounces of fluid up until about 30 minutes before the game or practice (remember that most sports drinks come in 20-ounce bottles).
- * Keep sipping sports drinks or water during exposure to heat
- * Start re-hydrating within 20 minutes of the conclusion prolonged exposure

Research shows that the first 20 minutes are the most efficient time to start refueling. Try to take in 20 ounces; no need to guzzle this down, but once you start drinking try to finish the bottle over the next several minutes.

The above are merely guidelines and we feel it is the responsibility of the patron to make the ultimate decision to participate in ORC events when heat may be a factor; taking into consideration the age and physical condition of the participant. Parents also have the ultimate responsibility to inform their child about the dangers of heat and need for protection, including sunscreen and proper hydration.