

Heat Related Illness

August tends to be our hottest month! Due to the high temperatures we want to do all we can to reduce the risk of heat cramps, dehydration and heat exhaustion. The heat can make children seriously ill very quickly. Here are some things we can do while at school to help students stay cool and avoid problems.

To aid in the prevention of heat-related illness in schools, the CDC recommends the following:

- Air conditioning is the number one protective factor to prevent heat related illness.
- Ensure the students drink plenty of fluids regardless of activity level. Don't wait until they are thirsty to drink. Plain water is the best choice. Drinks with high sugar content actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Very cold drinks can cause stomach cramps.
- Schedule outdoor activities carefully. If children must be outdoors, try to limit activity to the mornings. Offer shady areas to rest.
- Use alternative areas for PE, stay indoors if at all possible, especially when the heat index is high.
- Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. A sports beverage can replace these important electrolytes.
- Encourage students to wear loose fitting summer clothing and sunscreen.
- Avoid heavy meals; they add heat to your body.
- Be especially aware of children with medical conditions. Heat can trigger an asthma attack and bring on seizures.
- Never send a student with suspected heat illness alone to the office/clinic. Use a buddy system.
- Students riding the bus will need extra fluids. Windows should be down so air can flow through the bus when it is moving.

General First Aid Guidelines for Heat Illness:

Heat Cramps: (Muscular cramps brought on by exercise and the resulting loss of fluids and electrolytes.)

Treatment:

- Move the person to a cooler place to rest in a comfortable position.
- Lightly stretch the affected muscle and replenish fluids.
- Give person small amounts of water every 15 minutes.

Heat Exhaustion: (Cool, moist, pale or flushed skin, heavy sweating, dizziness, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting.)

Treatment:

- Move the person out of the heat and into a cooler place.
- Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool wet cloths, or towels. Fan the person.
- If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure the person drinks slowly. Give a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.
- Observe the victim carefully for changes in condition. If condition worsens or does not improve, call 911.

Heat Stroke: (Hot, red skin, change in consciousness, irritability, confusion, rapid, weak pulse and rapid, shallow breathing, body temperature can be very high – sometimes as high as 105 ° - skin may feel wet or dry.)

Treatment:

- Call 911.
- Quickly cool the body: Immerse victim in a cool bath if possible. Wrap wet towels or sheets around the body, place cold packs wrapped in cloth to the wrists, ankles, groin, neck and armpits.
- If victim refuses water, is vomiting or shows a decreased level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.

If you have any questions, please contact your school nurse or the Health Services Department.

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