SAFETY OF ATHLETES MAJOR CONCERN AS FALL SPORTS BEGIN

The Oklahoma Athletic Trainers’ Association encourages all to stay cool, hydrated, and informed as the fall sports begin.

Heat Related Illness: Prevention and Recognition

TULSA, OK  August 8, 2011  The Oklahoma Athletic Trainers’ Association encourages you to help your athletes stay cool, hydrated, and informed as the fall sports begin. Extremely hot weather can cause serious health conditions such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke which may lead to death. Exercising in extreme heat is more likely to cause dehydration and heat illness.

OATA strongly encourages the presence of a healthcare professional, such as a Licensed Athletic Trainer, who is trained in the emergency management of heat illness at all events taking place during these elevated summer temperatures. In the event that a Licensed Athletic Trainer is not available here are some tips that have proven effective in preventing Heat Related Illnesses.

Key Factors in preventing Heat Related Illnesses

- Allow for acclimatization periods in which athletes gradually increase intensity and duration in the heat.
  - 10% rule...do not increase activity more than 10% each day

- Rest. Allowing proper rest breaks during activity, as well as getting adequate amounts of sleep.
  - 5 minute water breaks in cool shaded area every 20 minutes of activity
• **Stay hydrated! Drink plenty of fluids before, during, and after activity.**
  - Dehydration occurs well before a person is thirsty and can occur on cool cloudy days as well.
  - 8-12 oz before, every 20 minutes during, and post activity
  - Use body weight to gauge how much water an athlete loses per practice. A 1-2% loss in body weight signals moderate dehydration and if continued, can lead to severe heat illness and possible hospitalization.

• **Exercise during cooler portions of the day: early in the morning or late in the evening.**
  - Before 10am and after 6pm

• **Develop a plan to prevent and care for heat illness including cooling techniques**
  - Buckets with ice water and towels which can be used to cool athletes
  - Tub with cold water that can be used for full body immersion

The Oklahoma Athletic Trainers’ Association (OATA) is the professional organization for Athletic Trainers in the state of Oklahoma. Athletic trainers are health care professionals who specialize in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and sport-related illnesses. Athletic trainers offer a continuum of care that is unparalleled in health care. For more information on athletic safety, please visit [www.oata.net](http://www.oata.net).

###

If you would like more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with Dan Newman, President-OATA, Head Athletic Trainer-Union High School, please contact him at 918-852-2066
Heat Illness Warning Signs, Symptoms, and Treatment Recommendations

Be able to recognize signs and symptoms of heat related illness early.
Do not exercise if any signs or symptoms are present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Signs and Symptoms</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exertional Heat Stroke</strong></td>
<td>Extremely serious illness that can result in death if not quickly recognized and treated.</td>
<td>Core body temp. above 104°F; altered consciousness, confusion, seizures, headache, dizziness, fainting, increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, fast breathing, dehydration, diarrhea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Emergency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat Exhaustion</strong></td>
<td>Moderately serious illness resulting from fluid loss or sodium loss in the heat.</td>
<td>Loss of coordination, dizziness, fainting, profuse sweating or pale skin, headache, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea, stomach/intestinal cramps or persistent muscle cramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat Cramps</strong></td>
<td>Loss of fluids in body causing painful muscle cramping.</td>
<td>Intense pain (not associated with pulling or straining a muscle) and persistent muscle contractions that continues during and after exercise. Often occurs throughout body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exertional Hyponatremia</strong></td>
<td>Potentially fatal illness that occurs when a person’s blood sodium levels decrease due to over hydration or inadequate sodium intake, or both.</td>
<td>Excessive fluid consumption before, during, and after exercising, increasing headache, nausea, vomiting, and swelling of extremities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dehydration</strong></td>
<td>Caused by improper hydration before, during, and after activity.</td>
<td>Dry mouth, thirst, irritable, cranky, headache, dizziness, cramps, excessive fatigue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Content source: National Athletic Trainers’ Association (www.nata.org), Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov).*