



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Keep Your Cool

Nonfatal Sports- and Recreation-Related Heat Illness Treated in Emergency Departments — United States, 2001–2009

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

In any sport, winning requires hard work and dedication, but it also requires staying healthy. Getting overheated is one of the leading causes of death and disability among young athletes.

Dr. Ellen Yard is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Environmental Health. She's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent heat-related illnesses among young athletes. Welcome to the show, Ellen.

[Dr. Yard] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Ellen, what sports or recreational activities have high rates of heat-related illnesses?

[Dr. Yard] Well, we found heat-related illnesses in all types of sports and activities, but they were most common in football and activities like exercise and track and field.

[Dr. Gaynes] Are they more common in any particular sex or age group?

[Dr. Yard] Everyone's at risk for heat illness but males and persons ages 15 to 19 years are more likely to get heat illness.

[Dr. Gaynes] Ellen, what are the most common symptoms?

[Dr. Yard] Heat illness begins with heavy sweating, pale skin, feeling very weak or having a headache, and as it progresses, it can lead to dizziness, confusion, or unconsciousness and that's a medical emergency.

[Dr. Gaynes] How are heat-related illnesses treated?

[Dr. Yard] Initially, if it's caught early, you can simply remove the person from heat. If it progresses to a medical emergency, such as if the person becomes unconscious, then you need to call the paramedics immediately.

[Dr. Gaynes] When are some strategies for preventing heat-related illnesses?

[Dr. Yard] All heat-related illnesses are preventable. Different things you can do are taking a lot of water breaks, rest breaks, trying to restrict your activity to early or late in the day, give yourself one or two weeks to gradually get used to the heat when it first starts to get hot out. Also, wearing lightweight or loose fitting clothing and having an exercise partner to monitor yourself.

[Dr. Gaynes] Ellen, where can listeners get more information about preventing heat-related illnesses?

[Dr. Yard] Well, if listeners go to www.cdc.gov and type “extreme heat” into the search box, the first link will take you right there.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Ellen. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Dr. Ellen Yard about ways to prevent heat-related illnesses among young athletes.

Coaches and recreational athletes alike should be aware of the symptoms of overheating and have a plan for preventing it, including gradual acclimation to the heat, practicing early or late in the day, and taking plenty of water breaks.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.