

## RAISING AWARENESS OF SAFETY ON THE PLAYING FIELD



## Who is an Athletic Trainer?

### Not Just Ankle Tapers, Athletic Trainers Are Healthcare Professionals

Athletic trainers are physical medicine specialists, who make clinical decisions regarding injury prevention, rehabilitation and most importantly, provide recognition of and on-site emergency care for catastrophic injuries, such as sudden cardiac arrest, heat illness and concussions.

Recognized as allied health professionals by the American Medical Association (AMA), athletic trainers have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university, completed appropriate clinical training and are certified nationally by the Board of Certification.

## Beat the Heat and Stay Safe

### What is Heat Illness?

Heat illness is a serious medical condition caused by your body's inability to cope with heat, resulting in heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Exposure to abnormal or prolonged amounts of heat and humidity can be especially dangerous for young athletes who sweat less, adjust more slowly and produce more internal heat than adults.

Children with chronic health problems, or those who take certain medicines, may be more susceptible to heat illnesses. Children who are overweight or wear heavy clothing during exertion, such as marching band or football uniforms, are also at risk.

### Knowing When to Cool Off:

You're hot, tired and may be sore from practice, but how can you tell if what you're experiencing is heat illness?

Heat illnesses typically presents with the following symptoms:

- Heat cramps – Usually the first stage of heat illness that causes muscle pains or spasms that happen during or after heavy exercise
- Heat exhaustion – The most common type of illness is characterized by dizziness, headache, nausea, profuse sweating, cool/clammy skin, rapid/weak pulse and an elevated body temperature (between 102° and 104° F)
- Heatstroke – A life-threatening illness in which the body's cooling system completely shuts off and goes into shock. Symptoms include disorientation, unconsciousness, NO sweating, hot/dry skin, rapid/strong pulse and an elevated body temperature that may rise above 106° F in minutes

**Heat stroke is life threatening. You should immediately call 9-1-1 if you suspect you or someone else is suffering from heat stroke.**

### Tips for Prevention:

- Drink the right types of fluids – such as water or a sports drink - before, during and after activity
- Avoid fluids with caffeine such as tea, coffee and cola
- Weigh yourself before and after practice; if you lose weight during practice or a game, you may need to adapt your consumption. Clear/light colored urine is also an indication that you are properly hydrated

### Other Precautions:

- Dress in light colored, lightweight, loose-fitting clothing on hot days
- Take frequent rest periods in shady or cool areas
- Wear a hat and sunglasses if possible and use a sunscreen that is at least SPF 15
- Schedule games and practices for cooler times of the day or workout indoors
- Increase time spent outdoors gradually to get your body used to the heat
- "Wet down" or mist yourself with a spray bottle to avoid becoming overheated
- If you have a medical condition or are taking medication, consult your athletic trainer and/or physician for further advice to prevent heat illness

### What to Do When Heat Illness Strikes You?

If you have any symptoms, STOP. Get out of the sun and drink. Massage or stretch your muscles if you're cramping.

Let your coach, athletic trainer or on-site supervisor know how you are feeling. Take off any excess clothing. You may need to douse yourself with cold water or immerse yourself in an "ice bath."