

Athens United Hot Weather Policy

The risk of heat related illness from vigorous sports activity increases with the temperature. The body generates heat which cannot be dissipated readily when the ambient temperature exceeds 85 degrees F, depending upon the humidity. Hot weather is considered at any point where the Heat Index reaches or exceeds 90.

Coaches and Staff should monitor the Heat Index daily.

Coaches should follow the following procedures based on conditions:

- Heat Index up to 89°: Normal Play. Regular hydration patterns
 - Heat index of 90°- 95°: Mandatory water breaks every 15 minutes.
 - Heat index of 96°-104°: Mandatory water breaks every 10 minutes.
 - Heat index over 105° (at start of training): Cancel or delay until index is below 104
-
- Encourage players to drink plenty of water before, during, and after practice. Water makes up to 65 percent of a youth player's body weight, and losing even a small amount of water can cause severe consequences in the body's systems. It doesn't have to be hot and humid for players to become dehydrated, nor is thirst an accurate indicator. Usually by the time players are aware of their thirst they are long overdue for a drink. Coaches shall educate players that they must pre-hydrate before hot games and practices.
 - Acclimatize players to exercising in high heat and humidity. Players can adjust to high heat and humidity in 7-10 days. During the period, hold practices at low to moderate levels of activity and give the players fluid breaks every 20 minutes
 - Identify and monitor players who are prone to heat illness. These include players who are overweight, muscular, out of shape, and who work very hard. Those that have experienced previous heat illness are more prone to getting heat illness as well. Keep an eye on these children and give them drink breaks every 15 minutes. For very young players, such as the U6 group, give even more breaks.
 - Make sure players replace fluids lost through sweat. Encourage players to drink 2-3 hours before practice or games and every 20 minutes during and after practice. Fluids such as water and sports drinks are preferable during games and practices. For younger athletes, it's better to use water instead of sports drinks.
 - Replenish electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, which are lost through sweat. The best way to replace these nutrients in addition to others such as carbohydrate and protein is by eating a balanced diet.

Coaches shall remain diligent about recognizing signs of heat related illness. These symptoms include:

- Early signs and symptoms of heat illness include weakness or fatigue, headache, nausea and dizziness or persistent muscle cramps
- Altered mental status, such as confusion, irritability, aggressive behavior, dizziness
- Slurred speech
- Cool / clammy skin
- Vomiting
- Hallucinations
- Loss of balance, falling down
- Throbbing headache
- Complaining of chills, while skin may be warm to the touch

IF a player has symptoms of a heat-related illness, coaches shall:

The following procedures are recommended if exertional heat stroke is suspected:

- 1) Notify EMS
- 2) Move athlete immediately to air-conditioned facility or shaded area if possible
- 3) Remove clothing and equipment
- 4) Cool athlete immediately using any of the following methods while waiting for EMS:
 - Immerse athlete in tub of ice water, use a strap or towel underneath the athlete's axilla to prevent athlete's head from slipping into the water
 - "Taco" method: place athlete in middle of large tarp, lift sides, and pour cold water and ice into the "taco". Ensure the athlete's head remains above the water level
 - Place ice bags or ice over as much of body as possible, cover body with cold towels (replace towels frequently), fan body or spray with cold water