

Preventing Heat-related Illness (HRI) at Summer Camps



This fact sheet provides information for New Jersey youth camps on how to **prevent heat-related illness (HRI)** on days that have high temperatures and humidity. Children, especially those who are physically active, are among those individuals at higher-than-average risk for HRI. Between 2017 and 2021, a total of 848 children under the age of 15-years old were treated at New Jersey Emergency Departments for heat-related illness. High heat days can also cause poor air quality, which can trigger asthma attacks or worsen asthma symptoms.

PREVENTING HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS AT CAMP



- ☑ **Hydrate:** Make sure campers drink water even if they don't feel thirsty. Make cool water available near all athletic fields and activity areas.
- ☑ **Adapt activities:** On extremely hot days, try to adapt activities to focus on lower energy activities and/or water-based programs. Also consider indoor activities if air-conditioned spaces are available.
- ☑ **Play early. Play late:** Schedule more strenuous outdoor activities in the cooler parts of the day when possible (early mornings for day camps or evenings for overnight camps).
- ☑ **Get acclimatized:** At sports camps or camps with a lot of physical activity, gradually increase physical activity over several days. Schedule rest periods in the shade and pool time to allow campers to recover.
- ☑ **Stay in the shade:** During midday, hold activities in shady areas or go indoors. Provide shaded areas for rest, quiet activities, and lunch.
- ☑ **Keep the rays away:** Encourage campers to wear lightweight, loose, light-colored clothing. Encourage campers to apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply throughout the day.
- ☑ **Watch for signs of heat-related illnesses:** Train all staff to know the warning signs of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke. See CDC's fact sheet on the warning signs and symptoms of heat-related illness on the next page (for the Spanish version: bit.ly/3E9Fx5M).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Extreme Heat: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat
- Extreme Heat: Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness bit.ly/3Ea6434
- NJDOH information for healthcare providers regarding HRI prevention bit.ly/HRI-Prevention
- Resources in other languages on preventing HRI ready.gov/heat

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

WHAT TO DO

HEAT STROKE

- High body temperature (103°F or higher)
- Hot, red, dry, or damp skin
- Fast, strong pulse
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Losing consciousness (passing out)

- Call 911 right away—heat stroke is a medical emergency
- Move the person to a cooler place
- Help lower the person's temperature with cool cloths or a cool bath
- Do not give the person anything to drink

HEAT EXHAUSTION

- Heavy sweating
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Fast, weak pulse
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness or weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Fainting (passing out)

- Move to a cool place
- Loosen your clothes
- Put cool, wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath
- Sip water

Get medical help right away if:

- You are throwing up
- Your symptoms get worse
- Your symptoms last longer than 1 hour

HEAT CRAMPS

- Heavy sweating during intense exercise
- Muscle pain or spasms

- Stop physical activity and move to a cool place
- Drink water or a sports drink
- Wait for cramps to go away before you do any more physical activity

Get medical help right away if:

- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- You're on a low-sodium diet
- You have heart problems

SUNBURN

- Painful, red, and warm skin
- Blisters on the skin

- Stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals
- Put cool cloths on sunburned areas or take a cool bath
- Put moisturizing lotion on sunburned areas
- Do not break blisters

HEAT RASH

- Red clusters of small blisters that look like pimples on the skin (usually on the neck, chest, groin, or in elbow creases)

- Stay in a cool, dry place
- Keep the rash dry
- Use powder (like baby powder) to soothe the rash

