



Heat Disease Alert

The most common health problem among endurance exercisers is heat disease. This is a serious condition which has resulted in death in a high percentage of cases, even in highly trained, young athletes.

Prevention:

- During hot weather, exercise at the coolest time (usually before sunrise)
- Drink water all day long
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol and other drugs
- Wear clothing that is light and loose
- Eat small, low fat snacks which you know will not cause you distress (far enough ahead)
- Don't significantly increase duration or intensity
- Slow down pace even more to adjust for heat, humidity and hills – especially in the beginning
- Take walk-breaks more often on hot days

Symptoms:

- Intense heat buildup in the head, significant headache, general overheating of the body
- General confusion and loss of concentration and muscular control
- Over-sweating and then cessation of sweating, clammy skin and excessive breathing
- Extreme tiredness, upset stomach, muscle cramps, vomiting, feeling faint

Risk Factors:

- Sleep deprivation
- Infection (viral, bacterial, etc.)
- Dehydration (avoid alcohol and caffeine)
- Severe sunburn, skin irritation
- Unaccustomed to hot weather
- Overweight
- Untrained for specific training session
- Occurrence(s) of heat disease in the past
- Under medications – especially the following: cold medicines, diuretics, medicines for diarrhea, tranquilizers, antihistamines, atropine and scopolamine
- The following medical conditions: high cholesterol, high blood pressure, under extreme stress, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, drug use (including alcohol), cardiovascular disease, smoking, unfit lifestyle

See a physician who knows the beneficial effects of running and fitness

- Before beginning the program
- If you have any question about any of the above conditions
- If you notice any significant change in body functions, immune response, etc.

Take Action!

- Watch for heat disease in group members and take action if you think they are in trouble.
- Walk, cool off and get help immediately.

From *Marathon!* By Jeff Galloway, pp. 189-190