

PLAY SMART in the elements

Smart preparation helps athletes of all ages perform their best and stay healthy - no matter the weather.



HEAT SAFETY

Heat illness can happen fast. Plan ahead, hydrate early and watch for the signs - before small problems become big ones.* On extreme heat days, check your local heat index before practices, games and outdoor workouts.

MOST COMMON HEAT CONCERNS: Progressions

- **Heat Cramps** - Painful muscle cramps and spasms
- **Heat Exhaustion** - Body struggling to cool itself
- **Heat Stroke** - Life-threatening heat emergency

REAL-LIFE SITUATIONS

Tournament Athletes - Four games. Midday sun. How much is too much? Start early: hydrate, fuel and take breaks in the shade.

Tip: A hand-held fan in bat bags and an umbrella attached to lawn chairs provide much-needed relief.

The Weekend Warrior - Heat+alcohol can increase dehydration risk and affect reaction time.

Tip: Drink a full bottle of water before your first alcoholic beverage and alternate water and alcohol throughout the day.

On the field - Heavy sweating leads to fluid and electrolyte loss, which can cause cramps and fatigue.

Tip: Replace fluids early - don't wait for cramps to start.



LIGHTNING SAFETY

Lightning can strike from as far as 10 miles away - regardless of other weather factors like rain.

If you hear thunder, you're close enough to be struck by lightning.

- **Go indoors immediately**
- **Avoid** open fields, bleachers, dugouts, trees, metal fences and golf carts



RETURN SAFELY

Wait 30 minutes after the last thunder before resuming outdoor activities.



COLD WEATHER TIPS

Cold muscles are more likely to be injured. Don't skip warm-ups.

- Dress in layers - remove as you heat up
- Cover ears, hands and neck
- Replace wet clothing quickly
- **Know the signs of cold stress: shivering, numbness, slurred speech and confusion.***



SIDELINE SMARTS

Things you may see - or hear - on the sidelines and what they really mean.

Pickle Juice or Mustard Packets?

Some athletes use these to help stop or prevent cramps. The strong taste may reset nerves and pickle juice contains sodium. Talk with your provider about what is right for your athlete.

Sports Drinks

For most activities under 60 minutes water is enough.

Coach's Hack

Freeze one water bottle the night before and pack one cold bottle beside it. By the afternoon game, the frozen bottle has melted and stays cold much longer than ice alone.

Sources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA)
- American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- National Weather Service (NWS)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)

