

Guelph Soccer Heat & Hydration Policy

Purpose:

Guelph Soccer acknowledges its responsibility to protect players and officials in severe weather conditions such as extreme heat. This policy aims to provide match officials, team officials and players with guidelines for soccer participation in heat.

Policy:

In the event of a heat advisory (as issued by Environment Canada), or game time temperatures above 29°C it is MANDATORY for match officials to provide water breaks as follows:

1. At the midway point of each half.
2. Provide a 60 second break.
3. Game clock is stopped during mandated water breaks.

If a heat advisory has not been issued and team officials are seeking water breaks, the request to the match official should occur prior to the game.

We recommend that parents, coaches, players and officials are aware of the following recommendations for soccer participation in heat:

1. Avoid dehydration and make sure players pre-hydrate: Players must understand not wait till they feel thirsty to hydrate, here are some practical recommendations:
 - 2 hours before exercise, drink at least 16 oz or 500 ml (average bottle of water)
 - 1 hour before exercise, drink at least 8 oz or 250 ml
 - If possible, during exercise, drink at least 100-200 ml every 15 - 20 minutes
 - Immediately after exercise, drink at least 16 oz or 500 ml of water
 - 1 hour after a training session or game consider eating a meal and/or drinking an electrolyte and protein-replacing drink (sports drink, protein shake, or milk)
2. Drinking carbohydrate and electrolyte fluids may be beneficial in avoiding heat trauma.

3. Wearing light breathable clothing is advised.

4. Team and Match Officials should be cautious in authorizing games and practices in environments where the temperature plus humidity combined are 35°C and over. They should inquire of the participants to ensure pre-event hydration, medication use and susceptibility to heat injury (prior occurrence). Also, frequent fluid breaks and fluid availability on both sides of the field are recommended.

5. Team officials must consider the risk factors which could predispose a soccer player to heat injury. Listed below are the major risk factors but this is by no means an exhaustive list:

- Not being acclimatized
- Unfit
- Hypo hydration
- Hyper hydration
- Use of a variety of medications or supplements
- Persons with persistent, disabling mental illness
- Certain medical conditions (cardiac, lung)

Below is a list of the early warning signs to look for and again this is not an exhaustive list:

- Flushed face
- Hyperventilation or shortness of breath
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Tingling arms
- Goose bumps (hair on arms standing on end)
- Chilliness
- Poor coordination
- Confusion, agitation, uncooperativeness

6. There are 3 main types of heat injury identified in the medical literature:

1. Heat Cramps - these are the mildest form of heat trauma and are commonly related to low body sodium and chloride levels.

Signs & Symptoms include - weakness, muscle cramps, collapse with low blood pressure.

Treatment - is aimed at replacing the salt loss and can be oral or by intravenous if vomiting is a problem. Having athletes put a little extra salt on their food the day before and day of game can be a helpful way to avoid this condition.

2. Heat Exhaustion - this is a more severe medical event as follows.

Signs & Symptoms include - weakness, irritability, collapse, unable to sweat adequately to promote body cooling, may proceed in the more ominous heat stroke and a fine rash is often present.

Treatment - remove athlete to a cooler environment, use ice baths, fans.

3. Heat Stroke - THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY - it is due to a failure of the heat-controlling mechanism. It may occur merely as a result of exposure to heat.

Signs & Symptoms include - mental confusion, headache, poor coordination, delirium, convulsions and death. The body temperature may be 106 F or 40.5 C or higher, the skin is usually hot and dry as the sweating mechanism has failed.

Treatment - Call 911 and transport to a local Hospital. Rapid cooling is the goal using wet towels, spray mist, sponge baths and removal from the heat. This condition could cause the athlete to go into shock and coma may follow so immediate medical attention is required.

Adapted from Ontario Soccer.

Reference: American College of Sports Medicine POSITION STAND. Exercise and Fluid Replacement, Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 2007

Acknowledgements: Dr. Rudy Gittens (Past Medical Director, Canada Soccer)