



## **Tips for Staying Safe During Outdoor Summer Activity**

By: Rick Partsch, MS, ATC  
Director, Athletic Training Services

Summer has finally arrived in Berks County and it has come in a big way. With temperatures in the 90's and even pushing 100, here are some tips on exercising or working in the hot, humid weather. Some do's and don'ts for your summer outdoor activities...

Please Do:

- Wear light, loose fitting clothing made of breathable fabric such as cotton. If your activities will cause you to sweat a lot, consider clothing that takes the perspirations away from your body (such as dri-fit) or have a change of clothing.
- WEAR SUNSCREEN! Whether your activities are in the morning, evening or mid-day, not only is sunburn bad for your skin, but it can also hinder your body's ability to stay cool.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. If you're thirsty, you're already dehydrated. You should be sure to drink throughout the day as well as every 15 minutes during exercise. (stay away from caffeine, water is your best choice)
- Remember to eat. The heat can decrease your appetite, but try to eat at least 5-6 small meals a day. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables and staying away from heavy, fried foods is a good idea. (the fruit can also help to keep you hydrated)
- Be smart! Don't try strenuous activities your body is not accustomed to and stick to exercise that you feel comfortable doing. Also, watch the weather forecast and monitor the heat index. (stay out of the danger zone)

Please Don't:

- Don't ignore your body's signals! Heat related illness comes with warning signs. Heat exhaustion symptoms include: fatigue, nausea, headaches, excessive thirst, muscle aches and cramps, weakness, confusion or anxiety, drenching sweats (often with cold, clammy skin), dizziness, agitation, fainting, and slowed or weakened heartbeat. <sup>1</sup>
- Don't try to "sweat those pounds off"! The weight you lose from sweating is fluid your body needs. The few pound difference post exercise is not permanent, only water loss. Also, make sure to take in plenty of fluids when swimming. Your body is still losing fluids that need to be replenished.
- Don't do activity during the hottest part of the day (typically 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.). If you need to be working in very hot temperatures, you should try to acclimate your body by only spending a few minutes a day in extreme heat for the first couple of weeks.
- Don't blast the air conditioner right after activity; you should try to cool down gradually. Remember extreme temperature changes can be harmful to your body.

Hopefully these tips can keep you safe and healthy throughout the summer. Enjoy it; we will be getting our jackets out of the closet before you know it!

1. Gelfand JL, MD Review: American Academy of Family Physicians, *webMD* 6/1/07.