



HEAT STRESS SAFETY INFORMATION

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You have probably heard the terms ‘heat exhaustion,’ and ‘heat stroke.’ These terms refer to the most serious types of heat-related illness or ‘heat stress.’

Heat stress can occur during periods of high heat and humidity if the body loses its ability to cool off by sweating. Heat stroke, the most serious form of heat stress, occurs when the body temperature starts to rise to dangerous levels.

The risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke are increased:

- For the very young, the very old and persons with chronic medical conditions or mental illness;
- Persons engaged in vigorous physical activity during periods of high heat and humidity; or
- When high heat and humidity are sustained over several days.

Heat stress is preventable. Parents can play a big role in helping children be ready for the heat and humidity that may be part of a West Virginia summer at camp.

What parents can do to help children prevent heat stress at camp:

- During your child’s check-up for camp, ask if your child needs any special precautions during vigorous activity. If your child has health conditions like heart disease or diabetes or obesity or if your child takes certain types of medication, they might be at increased risk for heat stress. Follow the doctor’s recommendations.
- Pack your child’s trunk to include:
 - Light weight, loose fitting, light-colored clothing;
 - A wide-brimmed hat;
 - A canteen or water bottle labeled with your child’s name; and
 - Sunscreen, SPF-15 or higher. Choose a product that says, “Broad spectrum” or “UVA/UVB protection” on the label. Read the label with your child and explain how to use sunscreen.
- If the camp allows campers to bring their own drinks, choose:
 - Bottled water; and/or
 - Sports drinks like ‘Gatorade.’
- Encourage your child to:
 - Fill up their water bottle frequently, especially when active;
 - Take breaks in the shade on hot days; and
 - Tell an adult if they don’t feel well.

Do NOT send the following to camp:

- Salt tablets; or
- Drinks with caffeine or sugar. These drinks can cause dehydration and make heat stress worse.

More information on heat stress can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/extremeheat/warning.html>