

Dragon Boats NSW Inc.

(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009)

(Registered Number: Y2086230)

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Heat Stress Fact Sheet

Dragon Boats NSW recognises the health risks that heat stress can induce for those participating in the sport during high temperatures. These risks can include dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke which are likely to affect paddlers, officials, volunteers and spectators.

This factsheet contains methods of preventing, recognising and managing heat stress and it's heat related illnesses that may be present in an individual during dragon boating activity.

Preventing, Recognising and Managing Heat Illness

Prevention

- Avoid dehydration by having athletes drink two cups of water two hours prior to strenuous exercise and another two to three cups per every sixty minutes of activity.
- Ensure all participants are wearing clothing that allows both easy evaporation of sweat and protects from the sun.
- Avoid Alcohol and caffeinated drinks before, during and after physical activity.
- Acquire adequate fitness and acclimatising to high heat conditions.
- Reduce the length and/or intensity of the activity during high temperatures.
- Adjust the scheduled time of the activity to avoid the hottest and most humid parts of the day.
- Consider the age, gender, medical condition and fitness levels of those involved in the activity.

Recognition

Dehydration – Fluid loss during exercise primarily via perspiration and respiration. Loss of electrolytes will also occur during activity of high intensity or long duration (60 min +). Characterised by increased thirst, dry mouth, tired/sluggishness, dizziness and/or headache.

Heat Exhaustion – Characterised by a high heart rate, dizziness, headache, loss of endurance/skill/confusion, pale skin colour and nausea.

Heat Stroke – Potentially fatal. Characterised by all symptoms of heat exhaustion with the addition of dry skin, confusion, vomiting, collapse and loss of consciousness.

Illness Management

- When a person is suffering from *dehydration* they should take a break from physical activity and replenish their fluids via water or via sport drinks, for electrolyte replacement, before continuing. Fluids should be replenished once again at the conclusion of the activity.
- If an individual shows sign of *heat exhaustion* they should cease from physical activity immediately and rest in a shaded area. Rehydration, raised legs, removal of excess clothing and cooling of body via water or ice packs.
- If symptoms of *heat stroke* appear in an individual medical assistance should be sought immediately including calling of an ambulance and seeking any local first aid assistance. Continue to attempt to lower the body temperature of the person suffering heat stroke by following the steps provided under heat exhaustion.