**Exertional Heat Illness Emergency Action Plan**

**What is exertional heat illness (EHI)?**

* **Exercise-Associated Muscle Cramps** (EAMCs) are sudden, sometimes progressive, involuntary, painful muscle spasms. Signs and symptoms of EAMCs can be described as muscle stiffness. Factors that contribute to EAMCs are: dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, fatigue, or a combination of these.
* **Heat Syncope** is dizziness that often occurs in people who are unfit or un-acclimatized to the heat. Other factors are sudden changes in posture, especially when wearing uniforms and personal protective equipment. Heat syncope usually occurs within the first 5 days of unaccustomed heat exposure.
* **Heat Exhaustion** is the inability to effectively exercise in the heat. The condition is manifested by an elevated core body temperature and is often associated with heavy sweating and dehydration.
* **Exertional Heat Injury i**s a moderate to severe heat injury. It is characterized by organ and tissue injury resulting from strenuous exercise and environmental heat exposure. The core body temperature is usually, but not always, greater than 105 degrees F.
* **Exertional Heat stroke** (EHS) is the most severe heat illness and is a **medical emergency**. This condition is a product of metabolic heat production and environmental heat load, when the thermoregulatory system becomes overwhelmed. The first signs of EHS are collapse, aggressiveness, irritability, confusion, seizures, and altered consciousness. Morbidity and mortality increases the longer the individual’s core temperature remains 105 degrees F and above.

**How can I prevent Exertional Heat Illness?** EHI can be prevented by acclimatization to the heat over a period of 7-10 days, progressively increasing intensity, duration, and phasing in personal protective equipment (if applicable). Athletes should have free access to hydrate themselves and should be encouraged to replace sodium-loss with foods and fluids.

**Exertional Heat Illness Emergency Action Plan**

1. The first coach to scene should **assess responsiveness and vital signs** and should have another coach **activate EMS**.
   * + 1. Send an assistant coach or an athlete to notify the on duty athletic trainer of the situation.
       2. Assess pulse and breaths.
2. Have the head/assistant coach **activate EMS immediately**.
   * + 1. Caller name
       2. Address: 6070 Mesa Ridge Parkway
       3. What facility the emergency is in
       4. The nature of the emergency
       5. The number of athletes/people involved
       6. Condition of the athletes
       7. If first aid was administered
       8. Any other information the dispatch needs
3. If the athlete has a pulse and is breathing assess rectal temperature (if available).
   * + 1. By this time the athletic trainer should be on scene and will be able to assess temperature if coach has not already.
4. Move the injured athlete/person to shaded area, if possible.
5. Rapidly cool the injured athlete/person
   * + 1. Remove extra layers of clothing.
       2. Rapidly cool in ice immersion (ie. cold whirlpool, ice bath, kiddie pool).
6. If these items are unavailable use ice towels, jugs, and bags to cool athlete/person.
7. Keep rechecking vitals (pulse, breaths, and temperature) until the EMS arrives and takes over the care of the athlete/person.
   * + 1. Assist EMS as much as possible.