

THCSSL HEAT SAFETY GUIDELINES *

No hot weather safety guidelines can guarantee absolute safety. All individuals participating in THCSSL softball games are responsible for their own safety and should monitor both how they feel and also observe their teammates. If you are not comfortable playing on hotter days and feel that it may put you at risk, inform your manager and do not play. If you play and do not feel well during a game, inform your manager and leave the game. Rest in the shade and hydrate, but if still feeling poorly have someone drive you home.

How heat affects your body:

Exercising in hot weather puts extra stress on your body. If you don't take care when exercising in the heat, you risk serious illness. Both the exercise itself and the air temperature and humidity can increase your core body temperature. To help cool itself, your body sends more blood to circulate through your skin. This leaves less blood for your muscles, which in turn increases your heart rate. If the humidity also is high, your body faces added stress because sweat doesn't readily evaporate from your skin. That pushes your body temperature even higher.

Pre-hydrate:

Begin hydrating the day before and on the day of your game and continue to hydrate during the game. Always hydrate ahead of time with water, not sugary drinks. It is best to only consume sports drinks during prolonged and strenuous exercise that lasts longer than an hour.

Wear sunscreen:

The most common heat-related injury is sunburn. Generously apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors, use a SPF of 30 or higher and use a product with a label of "water resistant" to allow for sweaty skin.

Know the Warning Signs of Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke:

Heat Exhaustion

Dehydration is a serious medical condition. Exercising in hot, humid weather can rapidly raise your body's core temperature, putting you at risk of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures, and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Signs of heat exhaustion include: heavy sweating, muscle cramps, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, and cool moist skin. The pulse rate may be slow and weak. If heat exhaustion is untreated, it may progress to heat stroke.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. Body temperature may rise to 103°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. With heat stroke victims, look for the following symptoms: dry, hot skin (no sweating), rapid and weak pulse, confusion, a body temperature of above 103°F, seizures, or unconsciousness. If you see someone with any warning signs of heat stroke, call 911 immediately, then cool the victim however you can (for example, move him/her to a shady spot or an air-conditioned location, or wet his/her skin with a sponge or hose). If you develop any of these symptoms, you must lower your body temperature and get hydrated right away. Stop exercising immediately and get out of the heat. If possible, have someone stay with you who can help monitor your condition.

* Credit to Montgomery County Senior Softball League for on-line content