*Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health*

**Prevent and treat heat-related illness**

***Know the signs and beat the heat!***

# Heat cramps

## Recognize the signs:

* Lots of sweating
* Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

## Actions to take:

* Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
* Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
* Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

## Seek medical attention if:

* The person’s symptoms are getting worse
* Cramps last longer than 1 hour
* The person is on a low sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

# Heat exhaustion

## Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

* Feeling tired or weak
* Fast or weak pulse
* Cold, pale, and clammy skin
* Nausea or vomiting
* Headache or dizziness
* Irritability

## Actions to take:

* Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
* Move them to a cool place
* Encourage them to lie down
* Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
* Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

## Seek medical attention if:

* The person is throwing up
* The person is getting worse
* Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
* The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

# Heat stroke

## Look for:

## Symptoms above plus:

* High body temperature (higher than 103°F)
* Throbbing headache
* Seizures
* Altered mental state or confusion
* Unconsciousness (passing out)

## Actions to take:

* **Call 9-1-1 – this is a medical emergency**
* Cool immediately:
	+ Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
	+ Remove outer clothing
* Keep them safe:
	+ If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
* If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury

[Extreme heat | mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/extreme-heat)

Extreme Heat- Best practices for operators of recreational camps for children

# Plan and educate:

* **Check the DPH** [**Unhealthy Heat Forecast webpage**](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-unhealthy-heat-forecast) for forecasted heat risk. Pay attention to DPH e-mail alerts when an unhealthy heat wave is forecasted.
* Train on-site Health Care Supervisors and other camp staff/volunteers on how to **recognize and monitor the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness** and the actions to take listed on page one
* **Identify campers and staff who are at greater risk for heat-related illness (HRI)**. Staff should know that people who work outdoors, older adults (age 65+), infants and children, pregnant people, and people with chronic medical conditions like asthma, and diabetes, or who are on certain medications are more likely to get sick from unhealthy heat.
* **Warn new staff and campers** about [acclimatization](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/mining/UserFiles/works/pdfs/2017-124.pdf). People who are not used to unhealthy heat, are more at risk during their first unhealthy heat wave. **Remember, the first is the worst**!
* **Implement a buddy system** to watch for early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. Buddies should prioritize those most at risk and take action quickly if they see the signs of HRI.

# Hydrate:

* **Educate campers and parents about the importance of hydration.** Send fact sheets home at the beginning of the season and before an unhealthy heat wave.
* **Schedule water breaks frequently** throughout the day in shaded or indoor areas. Staff and campers should not wait until they are thirsty to drink.
* **Provide ice** as needed

# Consider schedules and clothing

* Encourage everyone to wear clothing that will help them to keep cooler and protect from the sun
	+ **Light-colored and loose-fitting clothing** helps to reflect heat and promote airflow
	+ Wide-brimmed hats, light scarfs, and bandanas help to **protect the head, neck and face from sun exposure**
* **Use sunscreen with a high SPF- always**
* **Reschedule outdoor activities** to the coolest part of the day, like the morning and evening hours
* Camps that provide sport related activities should take additional precautions to schedule activities and rest breaks to **protect their young athletes**. Refer to the [Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) Heat Modification Policy](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CTHoward%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C75GG9121%5Cmiaa-heat-modification-policy-081821-amended-9-1-22cb.pdf).

# Identify or create cooler spaces

* **Provide artificial shaded areas** with canopies and umbrellas when natural shade is not available. Prioritize this space for people at high risk for heat-related illness and for new campers and staff who are not used to the heat.
* Create accessible fun **cooling water stations** during outdoor events (sprinklers, misters, etc.)
* **Increase ventilation** to sleeping and assembly areas, and provide fans if possible
* **Cover or tint windows** that get late morning or afternoon sun

Extreme Heat- Swimming at recreational camps - Plan for high volume days at the pool or beach

During unhealthy heat events, increase access to safe recreational swimming or water-related activities at permitted beaches and pools. Whether your camp is responsible for the pool or beach, or you are taking your campers to a permitted beach or pool, there are steps you can take to keep campers and staff safe.

# For pools or beaches at your camp:

* + Follow the regulatory requirements for **lifeguard ratios** 430.103(A):
		- * For every 25 campers swimming, or portion thereof, there shall also be at least one lifeguard
	+ Use additional staff to monitor pool decks and beach
* Swimming must be supervised by **at least one counselor for every 10 campers** in or near the water
	+ **Provide shade**, natural or artificial (canopies, umbrellas) for children and staff waiting in line to enter the swimming area and for children and staff who are not swimming
	+ **Test the water** more frequently than the minimum 4 times a day to maintain the disinfection level during and after high use and excessive UV (sun) which both affect pool chemistry
	+ Check that there is enough disinfection and treatment chemicals to **maintain a safe and healthy pool** during operation and after (for shocking procedures)

# If you are taking campers to a permitted pool or beach:

* + **Call, communicate, and plan with the pool or beach operator** so they know you are coming
	+ Remind the pool operator of the contractual obligation for **lifeguard ratios** for camps and confirm the lifeguard ratio will be met OR bring your own lifeguard if it is not your camp’s pool or beach
	+ Determine the best time of day so that **bather load isn’t exceeded** and children can swim
	+ Have campers and staff waiting to swim stay in **natural or artificial shaded areas**
	+ Remember campers may need to **re-apply sunscreen** with a high SPH if swimming for more than 2 hours
	+ Ask the pool operator to follow the best practices above for **testing and treating the pool** water