



Prevent and treat heat-related illness

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



Heat cramps

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

Look for:

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

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 911 – 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- Best practices for operators of recreational camps for children

Plan and educate:

- **Check the DPH [Unhealthy Heat Forecast webpage](#)** 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](#). 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](#).

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

