

Symptoms of heat injury or heat stroke

Cricket is a summer sport and as such it is inevitable that at times, matches will be scheduled for play during extreme heat conditions.

All captains, officials, team managers, coaches and umpires owe a duty of care to players and officials and should take all reasonable steps to minimise foreseeable risks which may result in injury or damage.

High intensity exercise in a hot environment can lead to: dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke is a potentially fatal condition and must be treated immediately by a medical professional.

It is important to be aware and react quickly to the following symptoms of heat injury or heat stroke:

- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Headache
- Confusion; and
- Light-headedness

Emergency plan

1. Lie the victim down
2. Loosen and remove excessive clothing & cool by fanning
3. Give cool water to drink if conscious
4. Apply wrapped ice packs to groins and armpits
5. Seek medical assistance

These symptoms indicate players should stop playing, drink more fluids and cool down. Seek medical treatment if these symptoms don't improve rapidly.

Also remember to keep an eye on other players or officials who may not realise they are suffering from dehydration or heat stress.

Timing of matches and training

Where possible, avoid scheduling training and matches during the hottest part of the day (usually between 11am and 3pm).

Early morning or night games minimise the likelihood of unacceptable playing conditions

Hydration

The Cricket Australia Policy refers to the following guidelines regarding hydration practices for matches held during hot weather.

- Drinks breaks should occur every 30-60 minutes in all matches (every 30 minutes in conditions of extreme temperature);
- Water is the most appropriate drink for re-hydration. However diluted cordial or sports drinks may be supplied. Flavoured drinks may be particularly palatable to children who have consistently poor drinking habits during exercise;
- Drinks should be available for individual players between drinks breaks. Umpires should be advised when additional drinks are sought and players should make every effort to ensure no time is wasted;
- Players should be encouraged to have their own drink bottles. This ensures that each player has access to an adequate level of replacement fluids and reduces the risk of contamination and viruses; and
- Where cups and a large container are used, cups should not be dipped into the container. Used cups should be washed or disposed of after use. Do not share cups.

Additional considerations in regard to hydration

- The local rules should state who is responsible for ensuring adequate water or other drinks are available;
- Consideration should be given to relaxing slow over rate penalties to allow for additional drinks breaks (which should be completed as soon as possible);
- Drink bottles also may be made available with club square leg umpires or stored underground on the field if a suitable facility exists (eg. covered tap box); and
- Encourage players and officials to drink plenty of fluids (preferably water) with no restrictions placed on players getting drinks, placing them on the field etc.

Player rest and rotation

- It is recommended that wherever possible when extreme temperatures are forecast, surplus players should be selected in addition to 12th man;
- Consider rotating players on and off the field. Rest periods are particularly important for faster type bowlers;
- Ensure players and officials seek shade when players not on the field;
- Team manager and coaches should be vigilant and not pressure their players in any way regarding performance or endurance;
- Limit bowling spells; and
- Limit individual batting innings.

Clothing

It is essential that everyone is made aware of the importance of:

- Wearing long sleeved shirts
- Wide brimmed hats
- The appropriate application and re-application of SPF 30+ sunscreen
- The use of wet towels; and
- Sunglasses.

Other Considerations

- The welfare of players and umpires is paramount;
- On days of extreme heat coaches, players, umpires and officials should be aware of the possible risks and carefully monitor all players and umpires. If any show signs of distress from the heat (see symptoms of heat illness outlined on Page 1) swift and appropriate action should be taken;
- Be aware that junior players are more susceptible to heat injury;
- Be aware of junior players also playing in senior matches on the same day;
- Ensure there are sufficient shaded areas at grounds for both players and spectators where possible
- In extreme heat conditions ensure there are qualified trainers and first aiders at the ground. Local rules should state who is responsible for providing first aid and/or the contact details of the closest medical assistance available; and
- On days where the temperature is extremely hot at midday, serious consideration should be given to abandoning the day's play. Member associations should reserve the right to cancel all play when extreme temperatures are forecast. A time for the notification of the cancellation of a day's play should be included in local rules.