

Guidelines for Heat Safety in Exercising Youth

As we enter into preparation for fall sports, teams of young athletes are beginning practices. While we can't control our southern climate, there are several decisions we can make to ensure a safe season for all participants. The number of heat related deaths in adolescent athletes has doubled since 1995. As parents, coaches and providers, we want our children to enjoy the benefits of sports, but we have to maintain an awareness of what is safe and appropriate.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released updated guidelines in August of 2011 regarding heat safety in exercising youth. The AAP's position is outdoor sports and physical activities in the heat are safe for most healthy children and adolescents if they receive adequate preparation, modifications, and monitoring. Heat illness in young athletes is completely preventable if coaches and other adults take some precautionary measures. Individual athletes may require more or less concern based on their conditioning and overall health status.

Risk factors for heat illness to be considered include: poor hydration, excessive physical exertion, insufficient recovery time between practices or rounds of competition, and wearing clothing or protective equipment that retains excessive heat. Individual consideration needs to be given to participants that are overweight, recent recovery from viral illness or diarrhea, poor physical fitness, insufficient rest, and chronic physical conditions.

Specific Recommendations:

- Before, during, and after exercise, drinking fluids should be readily available and their consumption encouraged at regular intervals. Generally about 8 oz. of water before activity, and 8oz. of water every 20 minutes. For longer-duration activities, electrolyte-supplemented fluids (sports drinks) should be given to hydrate in addition to water.
- Athletes should gradually be introduced and be permitted to adapt to the climate before the use of protective gear, and an increase in intensity and duration of activities.
- Activities should be modified as necessary by reducing duration and/or intensity, increasing frequency and duration of breaks, moving to shaded area if possible, and canceling or rescheduling activities if the weather is severe.
- Longer rest and recovery times should be permitted between same day sessions (at least 2 hours).
- Youth who are currently or who were recently ill, and those with other risks factors should be limited or declined in their participation during hot weather.
- Participants should be closely monitored for signs and symptoms of developing heat related illness.
- Educate athletes about signs and symptoms to recognize and act upon.
- Coaches, trainers and other adults should receive risk-reduction training.
- Participants with moderate or severe heat-related stress should promptly receive emergency medical services and rapid cooling.
- Trained personnel and facilities to effectively treat heat illness should be readily available on site.

Ways to Prevent Heat Illnesses:

- Drink at least 8 oz. of water before exercise, and every 20 minutes during activity. Longer-duration activities may require electrolyte-supplement fluids to optimize hydration. Be sure to continue fluid intake after activity as well.
- Drinks should be kept cold and available.
- Wear loose-fitting, light color clothing.
- Educate children about preparing for the heat and signs of heat illness.
- Have cold towels available to cool down with.
- Reschedule activities to a cooler time and /or use shaded areas when at all possible.
- Frequent rest breaks.

Condition and Sign or Symptom of Heat Illness:

- Exercise-Associated Muscle (Heat) Cramps: Dehydration, Thirst, Sweating, Fatigue, Transient Muscle Cramps.
- Heat Syncope: Dehydration, Fatigue, Tunnel Vision, Pale or Sweaty Skin, Decreased Heart Rate, Dizziness, Lightheadedness, Fainting.
- Exercise (Heat) Exhaustion: Normal or Elevated Body-Core Temperature, Dehydration, Dizziness, Lightheadedness, Syncope (fainting or passing out), Headache, Nausea, Anorexia, Diarrhea, Decreased Urine Output, Persistent Muscle Cramps, Pale Coloring, Profuse Sweating, chills, Cool/Clammy Skin, Stomach Cramps, Weakness, Rapid Breathing.

Please review the above information with your children that will be participating in outdoor activities, and keep these recommendations in mind when planning events. For more information on health related issues please contact your health care provider.

The Anson County Health Department provides sports physicals for athletes as well as college and employment exams. For more information on services provided by the health department, or to schedule an appointment, please call 704-694-5188.

By Jennifer Dockery, FNP-C, Anson County Health Department

Credit Wise Tips for College Students

College students are preparing to head to campus soon - and with a new school year comes new responsibilities. With many students planning to use credit cards during the school year to cover the cost of textbooks, supplies and even tuition, young borrowers are urged to be responsible when using this form of payment so they can maintain their finances and establish solid credit.

Since 2009 credit card company tactics have changed. According to the Credit Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure (CARD) Act, credit card companies are prohibited from issuing cards to anyone under the age of 18, and those under 21 need either an adult cosigner or proof of income. In addition, educational institutions must disclose any agreements they have with credit card companies that market to students, and credit card companies may no longer be allowed to entice students with gifts.

Establishing good credit is the basis to a healthy financial future. Opening a credit account with a cosigner is a wise step toward financial freedom if handled in a responsible manner.

The following tips can help students use credit cards wisely so they establish good credit and avoid overwhelming debt:

- Set up and follow a budget that includes paying off the credit card balance.
- Maintain a low credit limit and avoid overspending.
- Pay attention to fees and interest rates associated with the card.
- Pay on time, every time. Pay more than the minimum balance to reduce debt faster and save on finance charges.

Don't lend your credit card to anyone, not even a friend - ever. If you let other people use your credit card, you're responsible for those charges, whether they pay you back or not. Encourage them to own their own card.

With any credit card, protecting the privacy of personal information is a critical step toward avoiding fraud. Take these steps to safeguard personal information:

- Keep your account information confidential.
- Never give out your credit card number or expiration date over the phone, unless you initiated the call and know you're talking to the correct party.
- Make credit card payments online to ensure they are received by the monthly due date.
- Routinely access your account information online to track spending and to quickly identify fraudulent transactions.
- Review monthly statements for odd charges and report any mistakes or fraudulent activity immediately by notifying your card issuer. Look for complete instructions on your monthly statement and follow them carefully to protect your rights.
- When making online transactions, make sure the website you're using is encrypted. Check that the purchase page address begins with the prefix "https" - an indication of a secure site - rather than just "http."
- Copy the front and back of your credit cards and keep that information in a safe place in case a card is lost or stolen.

First-time credit card holders should think not only about the immediate purchase being made but also the long-term advantages and responsibility that credit cards present.

Free Movie is *Mirror, Mirror*

The movie *Mirror, Mirror*, starring Julia Roberts, will be shown on Monday, August 27 at 10 a.m. in the Little Theatre of the Hampton B. Allen Library. This is a free movie and is open to the public. Please make plans to attend and bring a friend.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call the library at 704-694-5177.

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