



**Exertional Heatstroke (EHS) is the leading cause of preventable death in high school athletics. Certain parts of our state continue to deal with extreme heat, as well as poor air quality. In those cases, practice sessions should be adjusted. Be aware that even less-than-extreme conditions also pose a risk. Coaches should adjust their plan accordingly to reduce the risk of exertional heat illness effectively and sufficiently.**

### How to Handle Heat Illness in Students

If you notice signs of a heat related illness:

- Immediately stop the activity.
- Get the student to a shady, cool environment.
- Replace fluids.
- Spray student with a cool mist or fan to reduce the body's core temperature.
- Stretch cramping muscles.
- Get immediate advanced medical help if the student shows signs of a decreased level of consciousness.

Students participating in high-intensity, long-duration or repeated same-day sports practices and training activities during the summer months or other hot-weather days are at greatest risk. Football has received the most attention because of the number and severity of exertional heat illnesses. Notably, the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) reports that 28 high school football players died of EHS from 2008 through 2017. EHS results in thousands of emergency room visits and hospitalizations throughout the nation each year. Although there are about one million young people who play high school football each year, NONE of these individuals should die from EHS.

Stay hydrated! Always hydrate ahead of time with water, not sugary sports drinks. It is best to only consume sports drinks during prolonged and strenuous exercise that last longer than an hour. Caffeinated and carbonated drinks should be discouraged. Coaches and athletes should drink plenty of water. Wear sunscreen. The most common **heat**-related injury in those playing or practicing sports is **sunburn**.