**CAP health & wellness handout: HEAT INJURIES**

**Heat Exhaustion**

*Causes*:

* Exertion or exercise in the heat
* Inadequate fluid intake
* High humidity

*Signs and symptoms:*

* Thirst
* Headache
* Dizziness
* Sweating
* Flushed and red skin
* Rapid pulse

**Sunstroke**

* Also known as Heatstroke
* This is a medical emergency
* Caused by a failure of sweating
* High body temperature >104 F measured rectally
	+ Associated with altered mental status: confusion, coma, or seizures

*Signs of sunstroke*

* Hot and dry skin
* Rapid pulse
* Rapid respiration
* Confusion
* Unconsciousness
* Seizures

*Treatment of sunstroke*

* This is a medical emergency
* Do not forget ABC's in rush to treat patient
	+ Airway
	+ Breathing
	+ Circulation
* Move the patient to the shade
* Actively cool the patient
	+ Undress the patient
	+ If possible, fully immerse in cold water
	+ Wet the skin
	+ Apply ice, especially to back of neck and armpits
	+ Expose to a breeze or fan
	+ Monitor the rectal temperature if possible
	+ If not available, cool to the point of shivering
	+ Do NOT rely on tympanic, oral, or skin temperature measuring devices
	+ Patient is generally not dehydrated

**Heat Cramps**

* Strenuous work
* High temperature
* Dehydration
* Inadequate dietary salt intake
	+ Does NOT require use of salt tablets
* Results in muscle cramping

**Prevention of Heat Injuries**

* Insure adequate hydration
	+ We sweat water so drink plenty of water
	+ Stay hydrated - During high activity, typically over an hour in duration, use of sports drinks or beverages containing salt, potassium, and small amounts of carbohydrates may be necessary.
	+ Drink water before heavy exertion
	+ Frequent sips is better than chugging a quart
	+ Avoid sugar or caffeine containing liquids
	+ No added salt
	+ Goal is clear urine
* Don’t skip meals
* Frequent rest in shade
* Un-blouse pants
* Wear a hat
* Cover skin
* Wear loose clothing

Camelbacks are superior to water bottles and canteens

* Permit continuous hydration while working
* Encourages frequent sipping

**Remember: Prevention is better than treatment**

* When possible, allow acclimatization
* Maintain adequate hydration
* Take frequent rest breaks in shade
* Wear proper clothing
* Those who are sensitive to the heat may be at higher risk for heat illness