TREATMENT GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH STAFF

**HEAT INJURIES**

Authorized health and wellness staff may treat heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, which are progressive forms of hyperthermia, as follows:

# Heat Cramps (painful muscle cramps especially in legs)

1. Removal to cool environment and rest from exercise.
2. Gentle massage and stretching of cramping muscles.
3. Oral replacement with cool water and electrolytes with an electrolyte-based sports drink such as Gatorade, Powerade, or equivalent.

# Heat Exhaustion (core body temperature greater than 100οF but less than 104οF with complaints of fatigue, anxiety, feeling faint, weakness, muscle cramps, pale and moist skin, headache, anorexia, diarrhea, nausea, and/or vomiting)

1. Removal to cool environment and rest from exercise.
2. Remove clothing and apply cold packs, wet sheets, or wet cold towels to neck, head, abdomen, and inner thighs.
3. Use a fan or fanning motion to circulate air over the patient.
4. Oral replacement of water and electrolytes with an electrolyte-based sports drink such as Gatorade, Powerade, or equivalent is **urgent**.
5. In cases involving vomiting, may require intravenous replacement of fluid and electrolytes with normal saline solution. Contact the clinician for further advice.

# Heat Stroke (core body temperature 104οF or above with tachycardia, hypotension, warm and dry skin, nausea, vomiting, headache and fatigue, and mental changes – often incoherent and combative)

1. Remove from source of heat and call 911 to transport for emergency care.
2. Remove clothing and apply cold packs, wet sheets, or wet cold towels to neck, head, abdomen, and inner thighs.
3. Use a fan or fanning motion to circulate air over the patient.
4. Maintain airway and be alert for vomiting to prevent aspiration.
5. If authorized to do so, administer intravenous normal saline solution and monitor cardiac function, urinary output, and core temperature.

Follow up by teaching prevention strategies (maintaining hydration; acclimatizing to and avoiding overexertion in hot, humid climates; using appropriate clothing such as sunshades, hats, and light reflective shirts that allow ventilation) to prevent recurrence.

# WHEN TO REFER TO THE CENTER PHYSICIAN

* If the student does not respond to supportive treatment
* If oral rehydration is not possible
* If temperature is above 100οF
* If there are mental status changes (e.g., confusion, incoherence, altered consciousness)