

Script – Broadcast – Rising temps, rising risks

INTRO

High school athletes across the country are already feeling the heat as teams begin practices for several sports, including football, cross country and soccer.

While student athletes and coaches are anxious to get the season under way, experts say it's important to stay safe, especially when it comes to practicing during the grueling August temperatures.

The summer heat is very dangerous for so many different reasons, and it is important to know and identify those risk factors associated with heat related illnesses, particularly the athletes, their coaches and the staff who work with them," says Faheem Ahmad, MD, a family practice physician with OSF HealthCare, who completed a fellowship in sports medicine.

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According to the [National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research](#), heat stroke is the third-most common cause of sudden death among high school athletes behind cardiac arrest and traumatic brain injuries. Already this year, a 16-year-old student athlete from Memphis, Tennessee, collapsed during football practice and died from organ failure caused by severe heat stroke.

Dr. Ahmad says athletes can experience anything from feeling tired from heat exhaustion to symptoms of heat stroke, which can include fainting, loss of consciousness and a body temperature above 103.

(((SOS)))

Dr. Faheem (FA-HEEM) Ahmad, family practice physician, OSF HealthCare

"Other signs include having headaches, feeling nausea, pains in the body, muscle cramps and then dry mouth is also one of the signs because dehydration and heat illness go hand in hand." (:12)

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It's also important to stay properly hydrated. Working out for more than an hour? Frequent water breaks are necessary and so are sports drinks.

But it's not just the heat student athletes have to contend with over the next month. Injuries such as ankle sprains, pulled muscles and broken bones are another potential hazard as teams prepare for the upcoming season. In the U.S., more than 3.5 million injuries occur each year among the 30 million children and teens who participate in some form of organized sports.

Regardless of the sport or activity, Dr. Ahmad says it's important to have an emergency plan in place that everyone involved is familiar with. Emergency situations can happen at any time during practices and games. Knowing what to do and how to respond quickly, he says, are critical in giving athletes the best possible care in emergency situations.

Dr. Ahmad says the bottom line is this: don't over train, know your limits and pay attention to any early symptoms of a potential health issue, whether it's a headache, weakness, tingling or numbness. If you have any concerns, talk to your coaches and trainers as soon as possible.