**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