

Avoiding Heat-Related Stress – Information for Events

Summer is a perfect time for various outdoor activities including concerts, festivals, sporting events, exhibitions, corporate events and parties. The hot temperatures, however, can cause discomfort or illness.

Heat-related stress is exhibited in varying levels of severity ranging from fatigue, sunburn, heat cramps, fainting, heat exhaustion, to the more severe heat stroke. Both participants and event organisers have a role to play in avoiding heat-related stress.

Participants

- Drink plenty of water regularly to prevent dehydration. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine in them since they have a dehydrating effect.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing and protect yourself from the sun by wearing a hat and using sunscreen.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase the metabolic rate and increase the amount of body heat that must be dissipated.
- Carry a temporary source of shade to outdoor events, for example, an umbrella.
- Never leave children unattended in cars even if the air-conditioning is on. Cars can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly.
- Rotate out of the sun to shaded areas frequently.
- When carrying food to the event, if possible, choose foods that do not require refrigeration.

Event Organisers/Officials

- Avoid the hottest part of the day for the event (generally between 11am and 3pm).
- Provide sufficient shade for participants and adequate water stations.
- Officials should rotate out of the sun frequently and have regular rest periods in air-conditioned areas if possible.
- Ensure trained first aid personnel and designated facilities for management of sunburn and heat-related illnesses.

- UV protection and heat-related illness prevention messages should be included in event programs and on promotional material.
- Encourage food suppliers to ensure temperature control in the preparation, transportation and storage of food.
- Consider the use of an air-conditioned indoor venue if suitable.
- When public safety is a concern due to extreme heat, consider postponing or cancelling the event.

For more information visit the ACT Health website: www.health.act.gov.au

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www.health.act.gov.au | Phone: 132281 | Publication No XXXXX

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