- Proper Hydration
- Know Your Athletes Limits
- Pre-Sport Comprehensive Phsyical

Cheering for Your Life™
NATIONAL CHEER SAFETY FOUNDATION

Heat Stroke & Exhaustion Prevention

Even one injury

is too many, if it can be prevented.

Physical Exam

Every cheerleader should have a physical examination with a health history. A history of previous heat illnesses and types of training activities before organized practices should be included. A Heart Screening including an EKG and Echo can give additional peace of mind. For more information on low or no cost Heart Screening go to www.nationalcheersafety.com

Hydration

The most important safeguard to the health of the cheerleader is the replacement of water. Water must be available to cheerleaders at all times in unlimited quantities. It is recommended that a minimum of ten minute water break be scheduled for ever twenty minutes of heavy exercise in the heat. Cheerleaders should rest in a shaded area. Fluid replacement should take place before, during and after cheer.

Acclimatization

Acclimation to heat is very important. Acclimation is the process of becoming adjusted to the heat. This should be done gradually and is essential in hot weather (over 87 degrees). It is suggested that a gradual physical conditioning program be used and that 80% acclimation should be expected after 7-10 days.

Physical Limits

Lack of physical fitness impairs the performance of a cheerleader participating in the heat. As the coach, you should know the physical condition of your cheerleaders and set practice schedules accordingly. Resist the urge to coach everyone the same. The cheerleader's fitness level must be considered.

Heat Stroke is a medical emergency.

Most heat stroke deaths are preventable if the proper precautions are taken. Observe cheerleaders closely under all conditions. Look out for signs of heat stroke. Some trouble signs are nausea, incoherence, fatigue, weakness, vomiting, cramps, weak rapid pulse, visual disturbance and unsteadiness. Heat stroke is an emergency. Delay could be fatal! Immediately cool body while waiting for transfer to a hospital. Remove clothing and immerse torso in ice cold water. Immersion therapy has the best cooling rates. If not available, rapidly rotate ice water towels combined with ice packs. Continuing cooling efforts until EMS arrives.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat Exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illnesses that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Athletes exercising in a hot environment are prone to heat exhaustion. If you see warning signs such as: heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting or fainting - obtain medical care at once. Give fluids if athlete is able to swallow and is conscious

How hot is too hot?

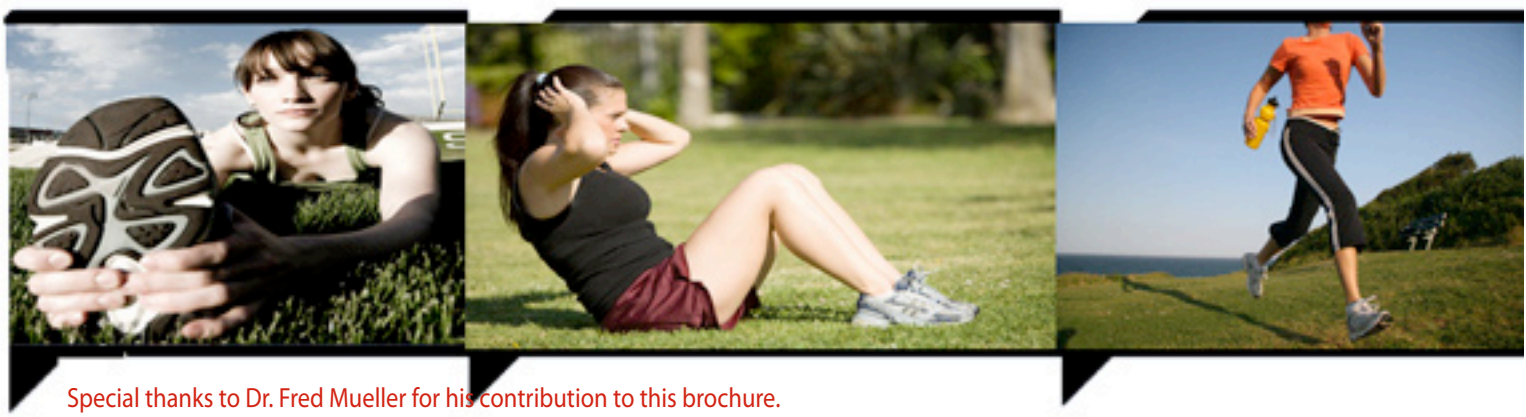
Test the air prior to practice or games using a wet bulk, globe, temperature index (WBGT index). Which is based on the combined effects of air temperature, relative humidity, radiant heat, and air movement. The following precautions are recommended when using the WBGT index:

Below 65°	-	Low risk
65° - 73°	-	Moderate risk
73° - 82°	-	High risk
82° plus	-	Very high risk

Emergency Plan

Every cheer program should have an Emergency Plan and rehearse it on the first day of practice. The National Cheer Safety Foundation's Catastrophic Injury Emergency Plan for Competitive Cheerleading can be downloaded FREE at www.nationalcheersafety.com. You may register completion of your Catastrophic Injury Emergency Plan for Competitive Cheerleading at www.cheerinjuryreport.com.

Remember, it is not an accident if it could have been prevented. All sports have inherent risks, injuries can happen. Be prepared; give yourself, parents and cheerleaders peace of mind. Rehearse you Emergency Plan as soon as possible.



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