Heat-related illness is preventable, and can occur even in cool weather.

**What Contributes to Heat Illness?**
- Weather: temperature and humidity
- Running speed
- Fitness level and level of conditioning to the heat
- Underlying medical problems
- Overdressing during activity

**Types of Heat Illnesses**

**HEAT CRAMPS**

*Symptoms:* Muscle cramping probably caused by loss of electrolytes, lactic acid accumulation in muscles.

*What to do:* Slow down, drink sports drinks, massage affected muscles, stop and rest, seek help at medical tent along the race course.

**HEAT EXHAUSTION**

*Symptoms:* Normal or slightly elevated body temperature, lightheadedness, nausea, vomiting, decreased coordination, muscle cramps, fainting.

*What to do:* Stop running, rest, cool with ice packs, drink sports drinks, get medical help and IV fluids.

**HEAT STROKE: MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

*Symptoms:* Nausea, vomiting, fast heart rate, headache, fast breathing, muscle cramps, lack of coordination, inability to walk, dizziness, confusion, disorientation, staggering or collapse. Medical staff identifies core body temperature over 104°F and low blood pressure.

*What to do:* Seek medical help immediately for cold water immersion and IV fluids under medical supervision; possible hospital transport.

**Tips to Prevent Heat Illness**

**PROPER HYDRATION IS IMPORTANT.** Thirst is a late sign of dehydration, but taking too much water can cause hyponatremia, or low sodium levels, which can be dangerous.

- To estimate your fluid status: look at the color of your urine — pale yellow or clear urine reflects hydration; darker yellow means you are likely dehydrated.

**AVOID ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION** the night before the race.

**WEAR WEATHER-APPROPRIATE CLOTHING.** It might be cool in the morning, but your body temperature will increase as you start exercising, and the outside weather temperature will rise during the race.

- Wear a visor or hat with mesh that will shade your eyes and skin but will allow heat to transfer off the top of your head
- Microfiber shorts and short-sleeved or tank tops keep your body cool
- Run in the shade when possible and avoid direct sunlight
- Use sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Wear protective eyewear that filters out UVA and UVB rays

Simply slowing down can prevent many forms of heat illness. It is better to run a “slow” race and finish healthy, than to push yourself to accomplish a time goal and end up in the hospital. Even fast, well-conditioned runners have been overcome by heat illness.

**DO NOT RUN ON RACE DAY** if you have nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or otherwise feel sick in the morning of the race.

**CHANGE YOUR RACE DISTANCE OR DEFER** until next year if you feel unprepared.

**CONSULT WITH YOUR DOCTOR** before running a race if you have ever experienced heat stroke or heat illness, you are at-risk to develop this condition again.

**STOP RUNNING** if you become dizzy, nauseated, or develop chills while running. Find shade, drink water or sports drink and seek medical help.