

Message from the Superintendent's Office: 9/4/15

It is no surprise that we experience weather extremes in New Hampshire. Currently, we are seeing the heat index increase as the summer heat and humidity returns. It is causing hot classrooms, but we continue to monitor the situation daily.

Schools are using preventative measures such as:

- opening windows at night to bring in some cooler nighttime air,
- keeping the window shades drawn, and the level of lighting low,
- using fans to circulate the air in classrooms and hallways,
- encouraging students to drink plenty of water during the day,
- accommodating for indoor recess for children, if needed,
- rotating groups of children through areas in the schools that have air-conditioning,
- monitoring the levels of physical activity in children and watching for signs of overheating,
- visiting the nurse's office if students become overheated,

Athletic Departments are aware of heat-related issues, and coaches make accommodations as needed. Practices have been shortened, water breaks are longer, and Athletic Trainers are watching athletes closely.

It is important to recognize the early signs of heat-related illnesses and know what to do about them. Information from the NH DHHS Excessive Heat Emergency Response Plan can be found at <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/climate/documents/nh-excessive-heat-plan.pdf>

Table 1. Medical conditions directly attributable to excessive heat exposure

Medical Condition	Symptoms	Responses
Heat cramps	Painful muscle cramps and spasms, usually in muscles of legs and abdomen. Heavy sweating.	Apply firm pressure on cramping muscles or gently massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water; if nausea occurs, discontinue water intake. Consult with a clinician or physician if individual has fluid restrictions (e.g., dialysis patients).
Heat Exhaustion	Heavy sweating, weakness, cool skin, pale, and clammy. Weak pulse. Normal temperature possible. Possible muscle cramps, dizziness, fainting, nausea, and vomiting.	Move individual out of sun, lay him or her down, and loosen clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move individual to air-conditioned room. Give sips of water; if nausea occurs, discontinue water intake. If vomiting continues, seek immediate medical attention. Consult with a clinician or physician if individual has fluid restrictions (e.g., dialysis patients).
Heat stroke (sunstroke)	Altered mental state. Possible throbbing headache, confusion, nausea, and dizziness. High body temperature (106°F or higher). Rapid and strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. Skin may be hot and dry, or patient may be sweating. Sweating likely especially if patient was previously involved in vigorous activity.	Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the individual to a hospital immediately. Delay can be fatal. Move individual to a cooler, preferably air-conditioned, environment. Reduce body temperature with a water mister and fan or sponging. Use air conditioners. Use fans if heat index temperatures are below the high 90s. Use extreme caution. Remove clothing. If temperature rises again, repeat process. Do not give fluids.

Sources: CDC, 2004a; Kunihiro and Foster, 2004; NWS, 2004.

Timberlane Regional Schools are very cognizant about excessive heat in the schools. For more information, please go to the Division of Health and Human Services website. A FACT Sheet on Excessive Heat can be found at <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/tips/documents/heat.pdf>