



Joint News Release

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Health Experts, Event Organizers Offer Tips for Beating the Heat in Advance of Hoopfest, Ironman Coeur d'Alene

*Events expected to draw thousands of individuals outdoors,
temperatures likely to exceed 100 degrees F*

SPOKANE, Wash. and COUER D'ALENE, Idaho – With extreme heat on its way, and large crowds of athletes and spectators expected in Spokane and northern Idaho this weekend for Hoopfest and Ironman Coeur d'Alene, health experts are warning the community that hot weather can be more than just uncomfortable—it can pose a threat to people's lives.

People who exercise in extreme heat are more likely to become dehydrated and develop heat-related illness, including heat stroke which occurs when the body is no longer able to regulate its temperature. If not treated immediately, heat stroke can lead to death or permanent disability. Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop within hours of exposure to high temperatures and not drinking enough fluids.

For both athletes and spectators, it is important to stop all activity and get to a cool environment if feeling faint or weak. Also, know the signs of heat-related illness and the simple things people can do—like drinking plenty of water—to reduce their risk.

“Heat-related illness is preventable, so we highly encourage athletes and fans to educate themselves on how to recognize and prevent it,” said Dr. Joel McCullough, Spokane Regional Health District health officer. “The key here is to drink before, during and after outdoor activity. If athletes or spectators are already thirsty before heading outside, they are already on their way to dehydration.”

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Heat stroke is an emergency and requires immediate medical care—it can be fatal. Signs of heat stroke include; a body temperature of over 104 degrees; a change in behavior such as confusion; light headedness; dry flushed skin; not sweating in spite of the heat; a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse; and unconsciousness. These symptoms may progress to a coma.

The symptoms of heat exhaustion include feeling lightheaded, weakness, nausea and fainting. A person suffering from heat exhaustion may feel uncoordinated, perhaps thirsty and sweat a lot. Their skin may feel cold, although their body temperature may be normal. Being exposed to high temperatures for too long can also cause muscle cramps and swelling in the feet or ankles. **What to do:** usually, resting in a cool place (air conditioning is the best way to prevent heat-related illness), staying out of direct sunlight, drinking plenty of water or fluids (but not alcohol or caffeine), and washing off with cool water if possible is sufficient to remedy this condition. If precautions are not taken or the person is not treated, heat exhaustion may turn into life-threatening heat stroke.

Hoopfest staff ordered cool-air misters and fans for this weekend and organizers plan to have extra water for court monitors, who usually spend six to seven hours on the asphalt courts. Volunteer medical teams staffing Hoopfest will be prepared to treat heat stroke, heat exhaustion and sun burns. Ironman organizers will be providing specific tips to its athletes for avoiding heat-related illness at the pre-event athlete meeting and to its athletes and volunteers via email. Athletes who are exhibiting signs of heat exhaustion may also be asked to pause for health evaluation at check-points during the race.

Those at greatest risk for heat-related illness include infants and children up to four years of age, people 65 years of age and older, people who are overweight, and people who are ill or on certain medications.

To avoid heat-related illness on hot days:

- Drink plenty of water or fruit and vegetable juices. During heavy exercise in a hot environment, drink two to four glasses (16-32 ounces) of cool fluids each hour. Avoid caffeine or alcohol.
- Limit your time outdoors, especially in the afternoon when the day is hottest.
- Stay out of the sun, take frequent breaks and watch for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke.
- Wear a high SPF sunscreen (at least 30 SPF) and remember to reapply it, especially if you are perspiring or coming in contact with water.
- Dress for the weather. Loose-fitting, light-colored cotton clothes are cooler than dark colors or some synthetics.

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- If you live in a home without fans or air conditioning, open windows to allow air flow, and keep shades, blinds or curtains drawn in the hottest part of the day or when the windows are in direct sunlight. Try to spend at least part of the day in an air conditioned place like a shopping mall, a store, the library, a friend's house, or the movies. Cool showers or a cool bath can help, too. Do not use a fan when the air temperature is above 95 degrees, it will blow hot air, which can add to heat stress.
- Never leave a child or a disabled or elderly person or a pet in an unattended car, even with the windows down. A closed vehicle can heat up to dangerous levels in as little as ten minutes. Lock parked cars to prevent children from playing in them.

For more information about avoiding heat-related illness, see the U.S. Centers for Disease Control [web page](#). More information can also be found at www.srhd.org.

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About Hoopfest

Hoopfest is the biggest 3-on-3 street basketball tournament on the planet. That means over 7,000 teams, 3,000 volunteers, 250,000 players and fans, 454 courts spanning 42 downtown city blocks, and that's just on day one! Beyond basketball, though, Hoopfest is an outdoor festival chock full of shopping, food, interactive entertainment, and every year brings something new.

Hoopfest is a place for players of all ages and abilities from all over the country to come together in pursuit of the ultimate goal: to become a Hoopfest Champion. It's where friends and families gather and cheer at the top of their lungs for their favorite team. It's the chance to see a college superstar, or your dad, hustle like he's in the final game of the NBA finals. It's a place for your seven-year-old to score her first basket.

Spokane Hoopfest is a 3-on-3 basketball tournament with something for everyone. With the help of countless volunteers, staff, sponsors, the City of Spokane, and let's not forget about the fans who show up to cheer on their teams, Hoopfest is an event like no other.

About Ironman Coeur d'Alene

Taking place in the pristine heart of one of Idaho's prettiest areas, this early-summer race always fills quickly. Coeur d'Alene is a classic resort and vacation destination that offers numerous recreational activities. The glacier-fed lake, surrounding forests and parks, the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes and the Coeur d'Alene Resort Golf Course's floating green are just a few examples.

Athletes begin their day with a two-loop, 2.4 swim in the clear waters of Lake Coeur d'Alene. The challenging two-loop, 112-mile bike course boasts no turns in an 80-mile stretch. The run loops along the shores of the lake blending the energy of a small town resort atmosphere with a world-class course. The single transition area and multiple loop course at the "hot corner" make IRONMAN Coeur d'Alene a favorite among athletes and their friends and families.

About Kootenai Health

Kootenai Health provides comprehensive medical services to patients in northern Idaho and the Inland Northwest. Its main campus is located in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and includes a 254-bed community-owned hospital. Kootenai Health is accredited by DNV, holds Magnet designation for nursing excellence, and is a member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. It is also designated as a Level III Trauma Center, and accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer. Kootenai Health 24-hour media line, 208-625-5300

About Panhandle Health District

If you've ever eaten in a restaurant, had lunch at the fair, taken a drink of water, cooled off in a public pool, attended public school, traveled abroad or enrolled your child at a day care center, you have likely received public health services from Panhandle Health District. Our diverse team of professionals provide over 40 different services to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho including food and drinking water safety, health education, senior services, disease control, prevention and immunizations. Panhandle Health District is committed to keeping our community a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

About Providence Health Care

Providence Health Care is the eastern Washington region of Providence Health & Services, a not-for-profit Catholic health care ministry committed to providing for the needs of the communities it serves – especially for those who are poor and vulnerable. Providence Health Care network of services includes Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center & Children’s Hospital and Providence Holy Family Hospital—both nationally recognized for quality care, as well as two critical access hospitals in Colville and Chewelah. It also includes a full continuum of services – Providence Medical Park in Spokane Valley (a comprehensive multi-specialty center), three urgent care centers, home health, assisted living, adult day health and skilled nursing care. Providence Medical Group of eastern Washington includes more than 650 physicians and advanced practitioners. For more information, visit www.phc.org.

About Spokane Regional Health District

Spokane Regional Health District is one of 34 local public health agencies serving Washington state's 39 counties. The agency was originally established as the Spokane County Health District in January 1970, when the City of Spokane and Spokane County merged their health departments. In 1994, the official name was changed to the Spokane Regional Health District to reflect the increased scope of public health services and geographic coverage. We have approximately 250 employees and serve a population of more than 400,000 in Spokane County.

In February 2013, SRHD became one of only 11 health departments across the country to receive national accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Go to srhd.org for more details. SRHD’s website also offers comprehensive, updated information about the health district and its triumphs in making Spokane a safer and healthier community. Become a fan of SRHD on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/srhd) or follow them on Twitter [@spokanehealth](https://twitter.com/spokanehealth).