**Prevention of Heat Related Illness & Injury**

Athletic participation in the heat can lead to a decrease in athletic performance, as well as medical emergencies, if proper steps are not taken to prevent problems. While the "common sense" steps of drinking water and cutting activity back when it is hot will keep most situations safe, the following guidelines will assist coaches and athletes in making decisions regarding safe participation and help prevent heat and hydration related illness:

- **Avoid the heat of the day:** Practices should be scheduled for mornings and/or late afternoons, and no strenuous outdoor activity should be required between 10a and 2p when heat is an issue. NHIAA has new standards for air quality. Coaches should review them regularly.
- **Extreme heat calls for extreme measures:** High heat and humidity (above 90 degrees and/or 85% humidity) may require practices to be modified, moved, or cancelled. If a Coach is asked to make a practice change, it should be understood that practice time can be made up and the health of the athlete must be the first priority.
- **Read the Signs:** Signs of dehydration include weakness, dizziness, irritability, headache, cramps, nausea/vomiting, and/or an inability to perform as expected. Athletes showing these signs should be immediately removed from participation, given cool fluids, and moved to a cool area under supervision. The Athletic Trainer should be called for evaluation. No athlete removed from participation due to these symptoms should be allowed to return to play until evaluated by the Athletic Trainer.
- **HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE!!!** Hydration plays a key role in the prevention of heat-related medical conditions, and thirst will not indicate the need for water. All athletes should be encouraged to "pre-hydrate" before practices and games by drinking 16-20 ounces of fluid (water or "sports drink") 2-3 hours before activity and an additional 8-10 ounces before taking the field. During participation regular water breaks must be scheduled.

**Water must be brought to every practice and game** (never assume the other team will provide water on away trips, and never start practice without water available). Athletes should provide their own water bottle (to prevent cross-contamination-"sharing" is not be permitted) at practices and games. These can be refilled from provided water coolers as needed.

**Athletes should never be denied water if they ask for it.** After participation, re-hydration is of major importance. Athletes should be reminded to re-hydrate at the rate of at least 16 ounces of fluid for each pound lost during participation. Body weight and urine color should be checked by athletes as a means of evaluating their status (proper hydration = clear urine; dehydration = dark yellow/brown urine).

If you have questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, please contact the Athletic Trainer!!