**BENDIGO BANK ACADEMY OF SPORT**

**ULTRAVIOLET RADIATION EXPOSURE**

**AND HEAT ILLNESS GUIDELINES**

Sport and physical activity are high-risk settings for heat illness and sunburn, especially amongst adolescents. Sunburn during adolescence increases the risk of skin cancer later in life; and heat illness can progress to heat stroke, which is potentially life threatening.

With climate change, the risk of UV overexposure and heat illness is likely to increase. When UV levels reach 3 and above sun protection is required. At this level UV can damage skin and eyes and lead to skin cancer. The risk of heat illness increases with increasing temperature and humidity. From September to April the UV Index forecast for the day is usually 3 or above.

Some Bendigo Bank Academy of Sport events are conducted during high-risk times and at locations where overexposure to UV and heat illness can occur. When high-risk conditions are identified please consider the following:

**1. Rule modifications**

* Limit duration and intensity of warm-up activities and playing time.
* Increase rest breaks and opportunities to seek shade and re-hydrate.
* Use player and official interchange and substitution more frequently than usual.

## 2. Shade

* Encourage participants to rest in shaded areas when not actively participating
* Where there is insufficient shade at sports venues, temporary shade (e.g. marquees or umbrellas) should be provided.

## 3. Air Flow

* Open doors and windows to maximise airflow at indoor venues.
* Make spaces with air-conditioning or fans available to high-risk participants.

## 4. Clothing (outdoor programs)

* Sports uniforms should be made from UPF (UV protection factor) 50+ materials and have long sleeves and a collar, if applicable to that sport.
* Wide-brimmed or bucket hats should be included as part of the on-and off-field uniform. Caps and visors do not provide adequate sun protection to the face and neck.
* It is advised that Australian standard wrap-around sunglasses be worn.
* Coaches and officials should act as role models by wearing sun-protective clothing.

## 5. Sunscreen

* All athletes are strongly encouraged to bring SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water resistant sunscreen. People with naturally very dark skin (not a tan or olive skin) may not need to wear sunscreen.
* Participants are encouraged to apply a generous amount of sunscreen (the equivalent of one teaspoon per limb) 20 minutes before going outside and to reapply every two hours.

**6. Hydration**

* Athletes are encouraged to bring their own clearly labelled drink bottle [bottles will be included in the uniform list].
* Ensure cool drinking water is available at venues.
* Encourage all participants to be well hydrated before participating.
* Provide flexible drink breaks.

## 7. Education and information

* Be aware of local UV levels and the times sun protection is required.
* Where possible, event programs and announcements include UV protection and heat illness prevention messages.
* All coaches are to inform athletes of the dangers of UV radiation and heat exposure

## 8. Individual risk factors

* To ensure safe participation consider athletes’ age, fitness, skin characteristics, acclimatisation, gender and medical conditions.

## 9. First aid

* Trained first aid personnel should be present at all competitions.
* At least one coach to be trained in First Aid – Level 2, be present at all training sessions and during comptetions.
* Participants feeling discomfort or distress are monitored and evaluated.

For a comprehensive guide to UV exposure and heat illness or for more information about providing safe environments for physical activity visit www.sunsmart.com.au or [www.smartplay.com.au](http://www.smartplay.com.au)

This policy was ratified by the Board of the Bendigo Bank Academy of Sport in September 2011