



Early Signs and Symptoms of Heat Related Disorders

By Mark Manley— Safety Officer

In hot weather riding, protecting yourself against dehydration and heat exhaustion is paramount. Dehydration is defined as an excess loss of water from the body. Heat exhaustion, is characterized by dizziness and headache, and can affect thinking and concentration. As bikers we cannot afford any loss of mental capacity or motor skill. Therefore, we must drink plenty of water along with a sports drink that has electrolytes. A good method is to alternate, i.e; first stop water, second stop sports drink, you get the idea.

Hydration requires constant vigilance and is more than just consuming water. If a rider continually dehydrates themselves by 5% a day, after five days on the road they may be only at 75% hydration levels; a situation that can present real world ramifications.

The Early Signs and Symptoms of Heat Disorders:

Several key signs play a role in addressing heat related issues:

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Unsteady Walk
- Unable to maintain lane position while riding
- Muscle Cramps

What can you do if face these early heat exhaustion signs?

- Stop Riding
- Rest in shade or area with air conditioning
- Take small sips of water for an extended period of time (at least 15 minutes)
- Consider a drink with electrolytes

If these signs persist or worsen (vomiting, convulsions, weak or rapid pulse) even after taking time out, call for

help, lay down in an elevated position in a cool area, loosen clothing and pour water on your clothes. Do whatever it takes to cool down!

How Much Water Should I Drink?

How do you get the hydration wheels turning? First, start drinking water 24-48 hours before you ride. In fact don't even get on the bike until you've at least had ONE glass of water. We've all heard the old rule: drink 8 glasses of water a day.

In reality you may need to drink more or less pending on your body size.

A better rule to go by is take your body weight and divide it by 2 for the number of ounces of water you should drink a day and more depending on your activity levels for that day. It's absolutely crucial to abide by this while riding in the heat.

In conclusion, stay hydrated and don't put yourself and other riders around you at an unnecessary risk.

MARK.

