

Ontario
Racing
Commission



HEAT EXHAUSTION ACTION PLAN

Heat exhaustion or heat stroke is a severe and potentially fatal illness associated with a marked increase in body temperature, usually as a result of intense exercise in hot, humid weather.

Dehydration compounds the problem and horses on diuretics may be more vulnerable.

Watch for:

- A rectal temperature over 40 degrees C (may continue to rise post-exercise)
- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Horse appears weak and disoriented and may stagger.
- Muscle tremors and spasms
- Collapse and/or seizure

Heat exhaustion is an emergency situation!

Take action:

- Get lots of cool water on the horse. Scrape off and repeat continuously until the horse's rectal temperature falls below 39.5 degrees C.
- Get the horse out of the sun and into a well-ventilated area.
- Apply ice packs to the head and neck.
- Call your veterinarian.

For further information, contact the Official Veterinarian at your racetrack or Dr. Bruce Duncan at 416.327.0520.