

- Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Todd Grothe. He's the lead athletic trainer here at Lake Region Healthcare. And he's here to talk to us about heat illness and getting ready for fall sports. So thanks for joining me. Good morning, Todd.
- Todd Grothe: Good morning, everybody.
- Katie Johnson: We've had what seems like a really warm summer so far, and that's great when you can be at the lake or in air conditioning, but it can be dangerous if we have to be outside. So I wanted to talk with you a little bit about pointers, what to watch out for in terms of heat illness because I know that's something you deal with with athletes quite often, but our listeners can gain some good tips from that as well. But before we get into that and talk a little bit about fall sports, you haven't been on the show for a while. Let's remind our listeners who you are. What's your background and, and what do you do here at Lake Region?
- Todd Grothe: Yeah, of course my name's Todd Grothe. I'm a certified athletic trainer. I've been an athletic trainer, will be 30 years in March. So I've been doing this a long time. I graduated from the University of North Dakota school of medicine back when we still had stone tablets, I think, instead of computers. I've been told that many times. So I've been here seven years.
- Katie Johnson: Great. And you lead a team of athletic trainers here. Tell us a little bit about them and what they do.
- Todd Grothe: Yeah. We have a wonderful team of athletic trainers here, starting with Brian Pickering and then Liz Skare, Kayla Fisher and Patrick Dilly, are all on staff here and they go to various communities as well as work here in the clinic.
- Katie Johnson: Right. And provide a lot of help to area athletes at schools that we partner with, and we'll talk a little bit more about that when we talk about fall sports coming up. But in your training and your work with athletes, like I mentioned, heat related illnesses can be a real force to reckon with. What are the most common types of heat related illness in the general population, and who do you see at most risk for that?
- Todd Grothe: Well, most recently here with the track seasons and the baseball seasons, softball seasons just finishing, we did have quite a mess the last track meet we had. There was a heat advisory that day, but the track meet continued on, and I believe we treated 14 different athletes for heat exhaustion that day. The conditions can get really ugly, really fast. And we don't really realize that. So the first symptoms you usually see with a heat-related illness are either some nausea or some cramping, and that can go south in a hurry. So we were adequately prepared to treat all of those athletes, sometimes many at once,

that day, where a lot of people aren't, if you're perhaps, maybe in your garden or mowing the lawn or out at the lake.

Katie Johnson: Sure. So when you say adequately prepared to respond, how do you respond? Or what should you do when you start to notice that nausea or cramping?

Todd Grothe: Well, the first thing you want to do is get out of the heat, find someplace cool, an air conditioned house or a fan, and some shade. If that's not available or even jump in your car and start the air conditioner up there. Get some fluid in you as quickly as possible. Cold fluid is best. Water is best right away. The body absorbs cold water better than warm water. And those things are primarily your first aid care when you're starting to note the heat symptoms coming on.

Katie Johnson: How about before we even get symptoms, what's your best advice for prevention?

Todd Grothe: We recommend pre-hydrating. And that doesn't mean an hour before you go out to mow the lawn or run your marathon. Those are things that should be done the day before, so that your tank is full.

Katie Johnson: And how do you know if your tank is full? How do you know how much you should be hydrating?

Todd Grothe: There is a recommendation of eight, eight ounce glasses of water a day. So that's not that much water, and a rule of thumb is if you're going to be outside working out or in the garden or whatever, I've been told that for every five degrees above 80, if the humidity is above 50%, you should be drinking two additional eight ounce glasses of water. So that's pretty significant, especially with the heat coming up this weekend, you're looking at probably over a hundred ounces of water alone to stay hydrated.

Katie Johnson: You're right. That is a lot. A question I have is about sports drinks or electrolytes. In addition to water, does that have a place or is it really that we need the water?

Todd Grothe: Well, there is a situation where you can drink too much water and then your electrolytes get out of balance. So adding a Powerade, Gatorade, type thing to your water intake and counting that as your fluid ounces of water is okay as well. In fact, I would highly encourage that when you're out there sweating.

Katie Johnson: Sure. But you don't get to count our coffee, right?

Todd Grothe: Probably not. Coffee is a diuretic.

Katie Johnson: Right.

- Todd Grothe: A lot of people will say ... I see a lot of kids nowadays drinking these Red Bull-esc drinks and stuff, as well as pops and stuff that have caffeine in them. They're a diuretic. They will make you urinate, and that water is not really doing any good when it's going out of you like that.
- Katie Johnson: Right. That's a good point. I mentioned earlier, too, that here we are in July and summer just seems to go faster and faster. Fall sports practices are going to be beginning before we know it. And I know we're all looking forward to what we hope will be a more normal fall sports season after COVID's damper on last year's events. Are you hearing anything from the high school league about vaccine and masking protocols for the practices and fall season coming up?
- Todd Grothe: I've heard scuttlebutt rumor. I believe they do have a meeting scheduled for the middle of this month. Right now, the scuttlebutt that I've heard is no masks. Everything's going to be back to normal again, but that only takes one kid to come down with flu symptoms and stuff. So hear this fall athletes, if you're listening, go get vaccinated. The classic tragedy that just happened this last week with NC State in the college World Series, and a couple of their players came down with COVID because they weren't vaccinated. And it cost them a chance at the national championship. I mean, you couldn't have written that any better in a horror novel.
- Katie Johnson: Yeah. Yeah. And like you said, it can change so quickly as a variant develops and becomes widespread among the unvaccinated. We can get ourselves into trouble really quickly. So the more people that can be vaccinated and that we can keep things under control, the better chance we have at a normal season. I can only imagine that masking only adds to the heat related issues as well.
- Todd Grothe: Yeah. Wearing a mask and working out ... We all experienced it if you were an athlete. It's not fun. And hey, go get your shot. If you don't want to wear that mask, go get your shots guys. If you don't want to see the mask mandates come back, and they will as quickly as possible if we see an outbreak somewhere.
- Katie Johnson: So we also noticed last year a change in the requirements from the state high school league for sports physicals because of COVID. So if I understand correctly, that means there's going to be a lot more athletes this year, who are due for that required physical. Can you talk us through that?
- Todd Grothe: Yeah. We decided that we would do a sports physicals night in several of our communities where we have our outlying clinics, as well as here in Fergus Falls a couple of days as well. I would highly, highly recommend you get scheduled for those days. It really puts a burden on our family practice and pediatric services here in the fall one week before, and everybody has to come in and get their physical because they forgot it. This physical is actually cheaper, but it's the same physical that you would get as before with a plus. An athletic trainer will be there in case any orthopedic issues ... Perhaps, maybe you've had a bad shoulder, a bad knee or a bad ankle or something, and the athletic trainer then

can perhaps discuss some stuff with you to help do some preventative things so that you don't re-injure that the next fall.

Katie Johnson: That's a really good point. So like you mentioned, these are happening at several of our outreach clinics and here in Fergus Falls, mainly the first week in August, and we've got all the details on our website at Irhc.org for those discounted sports physical blitz dates, like you mentioned, that can really make it nice and easy for you to access it, get some sport's trainer advice while you're at it, and do the same thing as far as getting your vaccines scheduled at the same time. So we really encourage that. Talking about the sports physical, what is a typical sport's physical exam? What does it cover?

Todd Grothe: Well, you go through your normal cardiovascular and health screening, just like you would at a regular physical. Then we will do a little review of your orthopedic screening as well. So it doesn't differ all that much other than we cater a little bit more towards an athlete, or perhaps maybe identifying some underlying conditions such as maybe a bee sting allergy, diabetes, some stuff like that, that you definitely would want to have your athletic trainer, or if you don't unfortunately have an athletic trainer at your high school, let your coaches know so that they can be aware that you have these problems.

Katie Johnson: Sure. Is it still important for parents to make sure their kids are getting their preventative wellness exams in addition to a sport's physical exam?

Todd Grothe: You should get a ... I think you should get a physical every year anyways, just because you never know. We've identified stuff. I have a story that I tell quite often about a kid that came in for just a sports physical and we discovered he had leukemia. Had he not known that, he might not be with us right now. So there's stuff that, that regular routine physical is definitely, definitely warranted.

Katie Johnson: Right. And another important piece of that I think is keeping up with your regular immunizations on a yearly basis as well. Given the extra number of kids who will need a sports physical, signed off by a medical provider, like we mentioned, we are having those sport's physical blitzes. So we really want to encourage our listeners to check those out and get those scheduled. And we mentioned the COVID-19 vaccines as well. Great advice on heat illness. Anything else that at this point in the summer, you really want our athletes, parents, in general listeners to know?

Todd Grothe: Yeah. One of the things that, especially with the upcoming heat again this week, we have elderly folks and people that are a little bit more susceptible to heat within our communities and maybe a neighbor or something like that. Please go check on them. Make sure they're doing okay as well. They are usually the first to suffer from the heat and the humidity. So if you have a neighbor, go check on them.

- Katie Johnson: That's really great advice. And you know, it takes a village, right? And it's a reminder, we're all in this together, so looking out for one another is really important to do. Fall sports season coming up. What are you looking forward to most?
- Todd Grothe: Oh, I just love the chaos, I guess. Those 75 hour weeks. People would look at me like I'm crazy, but I enjoy every minute of that.
- Katie Johnson: Any teams or athletes you've got your eye on with some high potential this year?
- Todd Grothe: Oh, I'm sure I would offend if I forgot somebody. So yeah. I am looking forward to a lot of kids, especially some of the ones that I've been rehabbing and stuff returning to sport. So yeah, I'm looking forward to ... I guess it's about a month away for some excitement.
- Katie Johnson: Like I said, it's going to be here before we know it. Thanks so much for all your great tips on a heat illness and preparing for the fall sports season, both with sports physicals and COVID vaccines. Let's hope for a very normal, very exciting fall sports season.
- Todd Grothe: Very good.
- Katie Johnson: Todd Grothe, lead athletic trainer at Lake Region Healthcare, my guest today on Apple a Day. Todd and Katie reminding you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.