

If you wear these...



use this...



or sport those...



then read this.

# Pre-event Health Information

## for Fun Run / Triathlon / Distance Swim Participants

The Australian Medical Association (WA) recommends the distribution of the following health advice to registered participants in amateur fun runs, triathlons and distance swims. There are particular medical concerns and potentially fatal health impacts resulting from the exertion required for these sporting events. Where the event requires high physical exertion, and attracts novice exercisers, there must be comprehensive health information provided as a matter of course to anyone registering. Consideration should be given to encouraging participants who have any doubts about their fitness or general health to visit their GP before taking part in such events. All participants should be encouraged to give due consideration to their degree of physical fitness before undertaking such events.

Registrants who have any chronic medical conditions (such as diabetes, high blood pressure or arthritis) or risk factors (such as smoking, being overweight, having a family history

of heart disease or sudden death at an early age), and have not discussed exercising with their GP should do so before beginning a training program and participating in the event. Exercise is often an important part of the treatment for such conditions, but those with these conditions may have some limitations or special needs that their GP can tell them about.



**Dr Richard Choong**  
**President**  
**Australian Medical Association (WA)**



## General Tips for Registrants:

- See your GP for a check-up before you start a training program. This is particularly important if you are over 40 years of age, are overweight, have a chronic illness or haven't exercised in a long time. This pre-screening is important in identifying any medical conditions which may put you at a higher risk of experiencing a health problem during physical activity
- Ensure you warm up and stretch thoroughly before each

training session and pre-event

- Cool your body down and perform light stretches on concluding your training session or post-event
- Ensure you have plenty of fluids and be mindful of maintaining your hydration throughout your training session and the event
- When training or competing, apply SPF 30+ sunscreen to exposed skin areas



## Medical Checklist for Registrants:

1. Has your doctor ever said that you have a heart condition and that you should only undertake physical activity recommended by a doctor?
2. Do you feel any pain in your chest when you undertake physical activity?
3. In the past month, have you had chest pain or shortness of breath when you were not undertaking physical activity?
4. Do you lose your balance because of dizziness or do you ever lose consciousness
5. Do you have any bone or joint problems (e.g. back, knee

or hip) that could be made worse by a change in your physical activity?

6. Is your doctor currently prescribing drugs for your blood pressure or heart condition?
7. Do you know any other reason why you should be careful about undertaking a new activity program?
8. Has anyone in your family died suddenly at an early age?

If you answered YES to any of the questions on this list, you need to consult your GP and be cleared to undertake an exercise program / participate in an event.



## Heat Illness:

The highest incidence of sports heat illness occurs in fun runs of 10km or longer. Vigorous exercise in sport places some people at risk of heat illness. Even in cool weather, heat illness may occur in people exercising at high intensity for more than about 45 minutes. Heat illness is a serious matter – if untreated it can lead to the rare but life-threatening condition of heat stroke. To avoid heat illness, participants need to take particular precautions to stay healthy and to exercise within their personal limits. Participants who are feeling overstressed or unwell should slow down or stop. If event organisers see participants who appear unwell, persuade them to stop and assist them. Heat illness may occur in strenuous sports, but may also occur in prolonged moderately strenuous physical activity in hot weather. Symptoms of heat illness may include:

- **light headedness, dizziness**
- **nausea**
- **obvious fatigue**
- **cessation of sweating**
- **obvious loss of skill and co-ordination / clumsiness or unsteadiness**
- **confusion**
- **aggressive or irrational behaviour**
- **altered consciousness**
- **collapse**
- **ashen grey pale skin**

If a participant has recently experienced a high temperature, infection, diarrhoea or vomiting, they should not take part in strenuous exercise. Those who suffer from a variety of medical conditions, who are taking medication or who are pregnant, may experience difficulties exercising in the heat. Examples include asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, epilepsy, overweight and obesity. Medication may also include those purchased over the counter. A doctor should be consulted if there are any uncertainties over the effects of particular medications. Adequate hydration before, during and after the event should be actively encouraged amongst event participants. The body cools off by sweating. As long as you remain hydrated, the body is able to cool itself off. The best time to consume fluids is before you are thirsty. Once you are thirsty, the body is already dehydrated.





A photograph of three runners in athletic gear running on a paved path. The runner in the foreground is on the left, wearing a pink and white top and black shorts. The middle runner is wearing a black and white top with 'vicklori.com' on the back and black shorts. The runner in the background is wearing a white and blue top and blue shorts. They are running on a paved path next to a body of water under a bright sky with some clouds.

# Warning Signs

## When to Stop Exercising

If you start to experience any of the following problems during high intensity aerobic exercise, it is best to immediately slow down. Allow your heart rate to drop gradually before stopping completely.

An abrupt stop can cause problems with blood circulation and fainting. However, in case of severe and sudden pain, stop immediately, seek help and follow up with your doctor:

- You have pain or pressure in the left or middle part of your chest, or in the left side of your neck, left shoulder or left arm
  - You feel dizzy or sick or have disproportionate shortness of breath
  - You break out in a cold sweat
  - You have muscle cramps
- You experience sharp pain in your joints, feet, ankles or bones
- You notice that your heart starts racing or beating irregularly
- Have any other symptoms that are causing you distress or concern