TACO Cooling

PROCEDURE

STEPS

1. Remove the sufferer's excess clothing and equipment
2. Place them in the middle of a tarp, which serves as the makeshift tub
3. Nearby workers pick up each corner of the tarp to form a sling ('taco shape')
4. Cover the sufferer with cool water and ice up to their chest
5. Slowly move the tarp back and forth to oscillate the mixture and initiate cooling
6. Monitor vital signs such as heart rate and breathing rate
7. Continue to advanced care and transport when the temperature is below 102 degrees

IF IT GOES WRONG

- Risk factors that raise concern: advanced age, diabetes, cardiovascular or kidney disease, pregnancy
- Risk factors: previous episodes of heat illness
- Medication risk factors: alcohol, cocaine, diuretics, SSRIs, stimulants, antihistamines, calcium channel blockers

BEFORE YOU START

- TACO = Tarp Assisted Cooling with Oscillation — the sequence is rapid recognition, rapid assessment, rapid cooling, rapid advanced care
- Heat stress: feeling of discomfort, physiologic strain (rising core temperature and heart rate)
- Heat cramps: muscle cramps, pain, or spasms in the abdomen, arms, or legs
- Heat exhaustion: heavy sweating, extreme weakness or fatigue, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, irritability, fast shallow breathing, slightly elevated temperature
- Heat stroke: high body temperature (temp >104), hot dry skin or profuse sweating, confusion, loss of coordination (ataxia), throbbing headache, seizures, coma

KIT YOU NEED

- A tarp, cool water, and ice
- Enough nearby workers to hold each corner of the tarp

Take Home Message:

Heat stroke (temp over 104) gets cooled fast: patient in a tarp, water and ice to the chest, oscillate — transport below 102.