Old Town HOG
Safety Program

Do you ever do this? - drew

Riding in Hot Weather

It's a proven scientific fact that your physical condition affects your ability to react to dangerous situations. Most riders know that you're more likely to be involved in a motorcycle accident when you're tired, angry, or exhausted. However, few realize the impact excessive heat can have on your safety.

When you're riding your motorcycle on a hot summer day, the best safety precaution you can take is to stay hydrated. Take plenty of water breaks. If you don't like the taste of water, drink sports drinks instead. However, you should avoid soda whenever possible. The caffeine and sugar will add to dehydration.

Dressing appropriately can keep you comfortable on a hot day. However, it's not a good idea to ride your motorcycle in shorts and no shirt. Keep as much of your body covered as possible. Skin exposed directly to the sun will evaporate water significantly faster than skin that is properly covered. Plus, overexposure increases your risk of sunburn.

Another easy tip to keep you comfortable on a hot day is to open the vents on your motorcycle helmet to increase air flow. Just remember to bring along some extra lip balm, since the additional air will dry out your lips.

If you're riding on a hot day, watch for signs of heat-related illnesses**. Heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or heat cramps can happen to anyone. However, alcoholics, older people, the obese, and those taking certain prescription medications are at an increased risk.

** What Are Heat-Related Illnesses?

Prolonged or intense exposure to hot temperatures can cause heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps, and heat stroke (also known as sun stroke). As your body works to cool itself under extreme or prolonged heat, blood rushes to the surface of your skin. As a result, less blood reaches your brain, muscles, and other organs. This can interfere with both your physical strength and your mental capacity, leading, in some cases, to serious danger.

By reducing excessive exposure to high temperatures and taking other precautionary steps, most heat-related illnesses can be avoided. Those who work in hot or humid environments - such as

manufacturing plants, bakeries, or construction sites during summer months - are most at risk. However, even long, hot afternoons at the beach can pose problems if warning signs are ignored.

With prompt treatment, most people recover completely from heat illness. However, heat stroke can be deadly if not properly managed.

What Causes It?

Heat illness can strike virtually anyone. But chronic alcoholics, the elderly and obese persons are at greater risk, as are individuals taking certain drugs, such as antihistamines, antipsychotic medications, and cocaine. High humidity also increases the risk of heat illness because it interferes with the evaporation of sweat - your body's way of cooling itself.

Heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat stroke all occur when your body cannot cool itself adequately. But each is slightly different.

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body loses large amounts of water and salt through excessive sweating, particularly through hard physical labor or exercise. This loss of essential fluids can disturb circulation and interfere with brain function. Individuals who have heart problems or are on low-sodium diets may be particularly susceptible to heat exhaustion.

As in heat exhaustion, heat cramps can strike when the body loses excessive amounts of fluids and salt. This deficiency, accompanied by the loss of other essential nutrients such as potassium and magnesium, typically occurs during heavy exertion.

Heat stroke, the most serious of the heat-related illnesses, occurs when the body suffers from long, intense exposure to heat and loses its ability to cool itself. In prolonged, extreme heat, the part of the brain that normally regulates body temperature malfunctions. This decreases the body's ability to sweat and, therefore, cool down. Those who have certain medical conditions - such as scleroderma or cystic fibrosis - that decrease the body's ability to sweat may be at greater risk of developing heat stroke.

http://www.dmv.org/how-to-guides/motorcycle-weather-conditions.php

http://firstaid.webmd.com/understanding-heat-related-illness-basics

Safety is No Accident!