



# BUCKET LIST Series

## Health and wellbeing advice and guidance for Race to the Wreck participants

This document contains some basic information on some of the commoner types of medical problems you are at potential risk from while undertaking any activity in a desert environment. All such problems are easily avoided so please take the time to familiarise yourself with them all.

### Sores and Blisters

You will almost certainly develop friction sores and blisters on your feet, and perhaps your back/shoulders, during your time in the Morocco. Although uncomfortable and often painful these are not in themselves a serious threat to your health. However, owing to the heat and reduced levels of personal hygiene you will be exposed to in the desert, bacterial infection can set in rapidly. To prevent infection, make sure you disinfect and bandage even the most superficial cuts at the end of each stage. This will kill off bacteria and keep the affected area clean.

### Giardia/Cryptosporidium/Diarrhoea

All water supplied for the duration of the event will be sterile so the risk of contracting any water borne condition is minimal. Nonetheless, be aware of the risks associated with drinking water from an untreated source. If you do drink some it should be filtered, boiled for three minutes and/or treated with a purification agent.

### Heat Cramp

These mild muscle cramps are brought on by dehydration and loss of sodium (contained in salt). If you start to cramp take it as a signal you're not taking on enough fluid/salt. Take a break and increase fluid intake until symptoms pass. If you fail to recognise or act on the problem you risk becoming more seriously **dehydrated**.

### Dehydration

*Symptoms: Fatigue, dizziness, nausea, headache, fainting, vomiting, inability to concentrate.*

*Treatment: Shade victim, elevate feet/legs, ingest plenty of fluid (lightly salted if possible). Do not resume activity until completely recovered with no symptoms remaining.*

Dehydration is caused by not taking on sufficient fluids to keep the body replete with water. The best way to prevent this is to sip small amounts of water regularly. You'll be provided with 1.5 litres

every 10km (approx two hours walking pace) so aim to consume all of this before being replenished with the next bottle. Water will be provided at the end of each stage so you'll have plenty opportunity to ensure you top up sufficiently at the end of each day.

**SIP EVERY FEW MINUTES AND MAKE SURE YOUR URINE IS ALWAYS CLEAR. THE MORE YELLOW IT IS THE MORE YOU NEED TO DRINK. IN GENERAL, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS DRINK TO THIRST.**

Failure to prevent dehydration may lead to the more serious condition of **heat exhaustion**.

## Heat Exhaustion

*Symptoms: Profuse sweating, pale/clammy skin, increased heart rate, increased breathing rate, decreased ability to urinate, weakness, dizziness, muscle cramps, vomiting.*

*Treatment: Shade victim, tepid fluid (lightly salted) to administered (begin with small sips). Refrain from activity for at least 24 hours (consequently will result in withdrawal from event on safety grounds).*

Often heat exhaustion is the prelude to **heat stroke**.

## Heat Stroke

Potentially FATAL, heat stroke is the severest of all the heat injuries. Normally this will affect those who suffer from heat exhaustion and continue to exert themselves in a hot environment.

*Symptoms: Collapse, loss of consciousness, hot/dry/flushed skin, increased body temperature, increased heart rate, increased breathing rate, disorientation, mental impairment, dilated pupils, chest/arm pain, seizures, coma.*

*Treatment: Shade, remove clothing, fan, pour water over limbs, cool body with wet rags, massage limbs. Administer tepid fluid when condition improves. Administer CPR in extreme cases.*

## Hyponatremia

Often called *water intoxication* this condition occurs when heavy sweating rids the body of salts. Water subsequently consumed cannot be processed effectively by the body and symptoms occur.

*Symptoms are: dizziness, disorientation, cramps, fainting, nausea.*

*Treatment: Increase intake of salt tablets or lightly salted water. Rest.*

## Anaphylactic Shock

This is a severe allergic reaction to a foreign substance introduced to the body. Depending on the person affected, it can be caused by anything from a peanut to an animal sting or bite. Treatment can be given with a shot of adrenalin and the ingestion of anti-histamine so check with your doctor prior to departure if you have any concerns about allergies.