



**Medical Director Notes for the Athletes**  
Dr. Ty Affleck, M.D.

Congratulations on being a triathlete, new or experienced! Your competitive sport is truly one of the best tests of overall fitness and represents an accomplishment of dedicated training and personal discipline. Remember, do not try anything on race day that you have not already tested in your training. Knowledge, adequate training and preparation are your best friends on race day. As medical director for this event, I wish you the very best experience and hope not to see you in the medical tent!

That being said, the medical staff is here to serve you and your race related medical needs. These may be minor such as insect bites, blisters, road rash and other abrasions or they may be major including hyperthermia, hyponatremia, dehydration, musculoskeletal injury or collapse. We have taken care of hundreds of athletes in dozens of triathlons and have prepared for months to provide your care. If we are unable to manage your race-related medical issues, we will supervise your transport to our regional medical center for further evaluation and treatment.

Many athletes forget to mention current illnesses or medications on their applications. Please do not do this. If you have diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or other chronic illness, you will need clearance from your personal physician prior to this race and you need to inform us of your medical conditions. If you become unresponsive during the race, such information could be potentially life-saving; we want to be prepared to care for your needs should they arise.

As a triathlete, familiarize yourself with some of the medical issues pertinent to endurance events:

**Hyperthermia:** triathletes may burn up to 10,000 kcal of energy during an Ironman and over 5000 kcal in a half. This generates a lot of heat. Add to that the usual ambient warmth of this event and you get a formula for heat illness. It is essential that you train in the heat to acclimate for this event. In addition, you need to know the common warning signs of heat related illness: nausea, vomiting, confusion, muscle cramping, fatigue, lack of sweating, fever and collapse. These are signs that you are already compromised. Hydration with cool fluids, walking, spraying yourself with water, loose fitting or breathable white clothing all assist in reducing heat gain. If you have had prior heat illness (cramps, collapse, exhaustion or stroke) you are likely to have recurrent problems unless you have made major changes in your training, hydration or venue. If you are suspected of having hyperthermia in the medical tent, a core body temperature (rectal temp) is essential and will be taken. If your temperature is severely elevated, you may be transported to the regional medical center.







### Medical Director Notes for the Athletes (CONTINUED)

Final notes of caution: It is now known that the swim portion of the triathlon is the site where the majority of deaths occur (approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of all triathlon deaths). There will be many trained swim course monitors on the course. If you are having trouble such as chest pain, shortness of breath, swallowing water, STOP and raise your hand. Do not wait until you are ready to go under water. Recent deaths at triathlons have occurred with swimmers seeking help too late.

The medical director and staff are here to assist you in all ways possible. Most athletes realize that when they are impaired physically, they are performing poorly and should not compete. Medical personnel may assess you during the race and help analyze your condition. If you are competing while experiencing a serious condition and do not choose to stop voluntarily, we have the authority to disqualify you from the race and remove you from the course. Be smart, and have a great race.

Ty Affleck, MD  
Santa Rosa Sports Medicine, Inc  
1255 N. Dutton Avenue  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
707-546-9400

