

Summer riding tips: THE HEAT IS ON!!

This summer is showing all of the signs of being a hot one. Temps have already been hitting the 100's here in the Midwest. With that kind of heat we have to remember that when we are out there riding, we are at it's mercy.

When you're riding the possibility of get dehydrated and hot is substantially increased. Between the heat and the wind it can really zap you. This is especially true if you are taking long trips. I know this first hand. A couple of years ago I went on a ride from St. Louis MO to Eureka Springs AR. This was not an exceptionally long ride (a little over 300 miles), but it was hot. I started the day off just fine. Got a good early start with the rest of the group. By lunch time the temps had hit 100 solid and the humidity was pretty close to the same. We ate lunch and started out again. For about an hour I was keeping up ok, but then I lost the group. They just seemed to vanish on me. I didn't realize it but it was me who'd got lost. Two more hours of driving around and one of the guys came up beside me. He later told me I was only going about 20 miles per hour and was wobbling all over the road. Luckily he forced me to pull over at the next gas station and stop for awhile. That night I was sick as a dog. Couldn't hold any food down, suffering from chills, and severe cramps.

Bottom line I was suffering from heat stroke and dehydration. Both of which can be deadly on their own. You can only imagine what could happen on the back of a motorcycle traveling down the highway.

How can dehydration be prevented?

Take precautionary measures to avoid the harmful effects of dehydration, including the following:

- Drink plenty of fluids, especially when working or playing in the sun. When riding you can carry a hydration pack such as a CamelBak that would allow you to drink fluids while riding.
- Make sure you are taking in more fluid than you are losing. A good rule of thumb is you should need to urinate every time you stop.
- Try to schedule your ride during the cooler parts of the day (early morning and late afternoon)
- Drink appropriate sports drinks to help maintain electrolyte balance.

How can heat stroke be prevented?

There are precautions that can help protect you against the adverse effects of heat stroke. These include the following:

- Drink plenty of fluids during when on a motorcycle trip, especially on hot days. Water and sports drinks are the drinks of choice. **Avoid tea, coffee, soda, and alcohol, as these can lead to dehydration.**

- Wear lightweight, tightly woven (most T-shirts aren't), loose-fitting clothing in light colors (don't think this includes black).
- Schedule vigorous activity and sports for cooler times of the day.
- Protect yourself from the sun by wearing a bandanna or skull cap or doo rags to keep the sun from landing directly on your head. and sunglasses.
- Rest in the shaded or air conditioned area when stopped.
- Increase time spent outdoors gradually to get your body used to the heat.
- While riding, take frequent drink breaks and keep your body cool by misting with water or using a cooling neck/head wrap to avoid becoming overheated.
- Try to spend as much time indoors as possible on very hot and humid days.
- If you live in a hot climate and have a chronic condition, talk to your physician about extra precautions you can take to protect yourself against heat stroke.

This has been some information that will keep you safe and allow you to enjoy your riding days a lot more. Be Safe

* This article is copied courtesy of Bikewares Newsletter