



Medical Information

The Toronto Marathon Medical Team urges all runners to consult their individual physicians when educating themselves about medical issues and risks relating to participation running an event such as a marathon or half marathon. Only a physician, who is familiar with your personal medical history, your current health, your medications, and your specific medical condition and risk factors, can advise you as to whether you are fit to run the Toronto Marathon safely. All runners should seek their physician's recommendations on precautions and pre-race preparations you should take before training and running in the event.

I. SERVICES

Start Medical Tent

Services at the Athletes' Village handle last minute needs. A small medical staff will be available to answer medical questions or concerns. Band-Aids and Vaseline will be available. We strongly suggest that every runner write down their average weight on the back of your bib. This number along with emergency contact information should be completed before you arrive in the Village/Start. Our medical team will have scales available in the Medical Tent, if you have not recorded your pre-event weight on the bib.

On-course

St. John's Ambulance Service along with support from Toronto EMS will staff medical aid stations at 16 locations, strategically located along the course. Each area is staffed with medical professionals. Basic first aid will be provided along with assistance for any medical situation requiring transport to one of the hospitals along the route.

Medical Van Program

Medical sweep vans (2) are pre-positioned along the route, and will pick up athletes/runners at aid and water stations. (Following the last runners, a slower bus/van will pick up athletes/runners between stations, when flagged down). Vans are staffed by medical volunteers who may provide first aid. *A runner may rest in the van while it is parked at a first aid station. However, once the vans begins to move, the runner's timing and scoring chip will be removed, after which time the runner may not re-enter the course to complete the marathon.* Medical Sweep vans do not return directly to the finish area; rather, they may make additional stops along the course to pick up runners.

Finish Line

Medical teams are located at the finish line in Queens Park, and the main medical tent is on located on the south end of the park roughly 100 meters down on the east side of the finish line. Additional members of the medical team will be located beyond the medical tent into the family meeting area. Medical personnel can be identified by their red volunteer medical hats. If you are injured or feeling ill, please seek out a member of the medical team for assistance.

Physiotherapy and Massage Therapy Services

The Toronto Marathon is pleased to offer Physiotherapy and Massage therapy services to the athletes on a first-come first-serve basis. The Team is comprised of approximately 200 medical volunteers who will be available from approximately 930am to 300pm. Treatments may last from 5 to 15 minutes depending on the needs for the athlete. The Physio / Massage Tent is located adjacent to the Medical Tent at Queens Park north of the legislature building. Expected wait time is approx 5-10 minutes however this varies with the number of therapists available and number of athletes requiring attention.

After you cross the Finish Line

During any prolonged physical activity, the body's blood supply is usually redirected to the extremities and away from internal organs. Runners should continue to walk after finishing the race. Standing still or stopping can cause you to feel nauseous, dizzy and weak. Walking may help redirect your blood to vital organs, so it is often advisable to keep moving. In any event, if you think you need help, ask one of our medical personnel for assistance.

II. HYDRATION, DEHYDRATION AND HYPONATREMIA

The Toronto Marathon Medical team has provided each registered runner with a flier, which accompanies your registration material. The handout, entitled "The Right Way to Hydrate for a Marathon," has been developed by the American Medical Athletic Association and offers important information relevant to athletes of all abilities. It is important for runners to be aware that there are many risks involved in running a marathon. It must also be understood that a runner's susceptibility to a particular risk will depend on a number of different factors, including factors unique to the individual runner. Medical knowledge and medical therapies relating to long distance running are continuing to evolve and develop. For instance, one of the risks which is receiving attention is hyponatremia, and there are studies which indicate that females, runners with a slight build, runners that take over 4 hours to complete the course and those taking nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (such as Advil, Motrin, Aleve, ibuprofen, naproxen etc.) may be particularly susceptible to this risk. It is your responsibility to understand your specific fluid needs and not over drink before, during or after the event. Unfortunately, no one study is definitive or comprehensive. Therefore, the Toronto Medical team urges all participants to read publicly available materials and to educate themselves fully about the medical risks associated with running a marathon as well as professional recommendations about training, nutrition, hydration and injury-prevention. For further information, you might visit websites such as that of the American Running Association at www.americanrunning.org and the many "Running-Related Brochures" and "Fitness Links" referred to therein*, consult leading professional publications on these subjects, and consult your own physician.

III. WEATHER

Preparing for cold weather

Toronto weather conditions in October can be cold and rainy, so runners must dress properly. Approximately 60% of a runner's body heat can be lost from the head.

Change out of wet gear as soon as possible. Mylar® blankets will be available at the finish. These blankets help the body retain a limited amount of the body's own heat, but they are not designed to keep you warm for a significant length of time. Seek out family and friends to assist you. A plan to find a post-race support group should be an important part of every runner's pre-race checklist.

Preparing for warm weather

Occasionally, the weather in October can be warmer than normal, placing runners at risk for heat illness. The degree of risk to runners is determined by both heat and humidity. If it is a hot day, but the humidity is low, the dryness of the air enhances the body's ability to keep body temperature appropriately regulated by the cooling effect of sweat evaporation. However, this occurs at the expense of becoming dehydrated. If the body cannot keep in heat balance by increasing heat loss, the body often responds by decreasing the amount of body heat produced. Simply stated, runners are encouraged to slow down or stop. Failure to do so can result in a rapid rise in temperature to dangerous levels, which may damage the heat regulatory mechanism in the brain. This is heat stroke, which will result in damage to organs such as the liver, brain and kidneys. The symptoms of impending heat illness include weakness, heat sensation on the upper body, lightheadedness, confusion, blurred vision, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, a generalized sensation of tingling in the neck and shoulders which can progress to disorientation, profound weakness and collapse.

How the Toronto Marathon Medical Team may assist you:

1. Public address announcements stating the risk of heat illness or hypothermia may be made at both the Athletes Village and at the starting line.
2. Fluids are available before, during and after the race. The medical team suggests that you drink a pint of fluid two hours prior to the start and then take fluids along the course at regular intervals and as needed based on personal experience. Note: medical problems can arise from excessive (hyponatremia), as well as insufficient, intake of fluids. Gatorade has carbohydrate solution that provides additional energy to fight fatigue during long distance runs. Electrolytes like sodium and chloride are lost in sweat. Gatorade will help replace some of these minerals lost during exercise, but will not prevent hyponatremia. Both Gatorade ® and water will be available at various stations along the route. If you feel ill along the course, we strongly recommend that you seek medical attention at one of the First Aid Stations.
3. Sixteen First Aid Stations are located along the route and mobile emergency vehicles are positioned for transport to major medical centers. Teams of medical personnel are located at the finish line to assist participants in need of attention, and these teams are supported by a larger medical station located just past the finish line at the south end of Queens Park.
4. If you are feeling ill, and experiencing medical problems, runners are strongly suggested to withdraw from the race and seek medical attention. Vans staffed with medical personnel will pick you from our First Aid stations along the route. Participants will be transported to the finish area at the rear of the primary medical tent. In some cases you may be transported to a local hospital for follow up care. We ask that you have hospital EMS contact us once you arrive. (Provide bib number)

The responsibilities of every participant:

1. Consult your physician before starting any exercise program.
2. Fill out the Emergency Information, the Medical History form, and your pre-race weight on the reverse of your bib number.
3. Listen and understand the meaning of local weather forecasts. Know the risks of participating in extreme temperatures of either range and plan accordingly. Both heat-related injuries and hyponatremia are life threatening conditions. Adjust your race and hydration plans. **DO NOT OVER DRINK!**
4. Develop and implement your individual plan for hydration. Be prepared to adjust your plan given the weather conditions and how you are feeling during the race.
5. If you experience or feel you are about to experience a medical problem, ask for help immediately. It is foolish and dangerous to abuse your body.
6. Help your fellow participants..... if you see a runner in distress ask someone to call 911.