



Recognizing Heat Rash

What is Heat Rash?

If your child experiences tiny red bumps surrounded by redness on the skin (top photo left), this is likely a form of Miliaria, or “heat rash”. In infants to young children this is called *Miliaria Crystallina*, and is the most common (and mildest) form of heat rash.

The reaction occurs when a child’s immature sweat glands become clogged. This can be caused simply by a sudden rise in outdoor temperature that your child is not acclimated to. Almost all reports we get of heat rash are in Springtime, as children are transitioning from being inside on the cold days, to running and playing outdoors on the warmer days. Ironically, we seldom hear of heat rashes in the summertime when it is the hottest outside—including from summer camps, where children spend most of the day outdoors.

The Role of Sunscreen

Because a heat rash is essentially a child’s pores becoming clogged, adding sunscreen to hot, sweaty skin can make the condition worse. Sunscreen should only be applied to cool dry skin. Additionally, because many broad-spectrum sunscreens use “absorbers” that diffuse harmful UV rays out as heat, they can contribute to the surface temperature of the skin, but are typically NOT the cause of a heat rash.

Heat Rash or Allergic Reaction?

If your child gets a rash, the tips below will help you discern between a heat rash (usually not serious) or a rash caused by an allergic reaction (may require medical attention):

Cause of Heat Rash vs Allergic Reaction—

- Heat rash is caused by obstructions in the sweat ducts during warm weather.
- Allergic reactions (urticaria) are caused by the immune system of the body against environmental agents such as drugs or seafood.

Characteristics of Heat Rash vs Allergic Reaction—

- Heat rash appears as tiny, sometimes itchy red dots.
- Allergic urticaria appears as itchy, pale red patches.

What You’ll See—

- Heat rash appears slowly over hours or next day.
- Urticaria (hives) can appear within just a few minutes.

Complications—

- Heat rashes rarely get infected.
- Urticaria can progress to anaphylactic shock.

*If your child develops a rash, consult a licensed health professional.
If you have any concerns about our sunscreen, please give us a call.*

1-888-356-8899