



Understanding the fitness-related ‘rhabdo’

Have you heard of “rhabdo”? No, it’s not the latest superfood seed imported from the heart of the rainforest. Also dubbed the “spinning disease,” rhabdo, short for rhabdomyolysis, is a serious condition known to the medical world for years, but is only recently garnering more widespread attention thanks to the high-impact fitness craze.

Rhabdomyolysis is a rare and dangerous condition that has recently been affecting extreme athletes.

According to the Harvard Medical School, rhabdo is a rare condition that occurs when muscle cells burst and leak their contents into the blood stream. This can

cause kidney injury, dark or brown urine, weakness, and muscle soreness. Trauma, medication and drug or alcohol misuse can contribute to rhabdo, but so can intense physical activity. The Mayo Clinic states that rhabdo has been seen in extreme athletes, such as weight lifters and marathon runners. Rhabdo also can afflict people new to fitness regimens who are attempting to push themselves too far, too quickly. According to Dr. Leslie Hamlett, a nephrology specialist at Freeman Health System in Missouri, she’s not surprised that those participating in intense workouts have been experiencing rhabdo. Dr. Hamlett feels that athletes crave the pain and burn — equating it to a job well done. However, the earliest symptoms of rhabdo mimic those of a really tough workout, making them easy to overlook.

The following tips can help people reduce their risk of developing rhabdomyolysis.

- Avoid alcohol and drug abuse.
 - Seek prompt medical help after an accident or muscle trauma.
 - Do not work out in excessive heat.
 - Stay hydrated throughout a workout and attempt to maintain a normal body temperature. Fluids with electrolytes can be beneficial.
 - When working out, gradually increase intensity, whether you’re a seasoned athlete or a beginner.
- Rhabdo is a serious medical condition that those engaging in extreme workouts should familiarize themselves with early on. Although rare, the condition is serious enough to warrant caution while exercising.



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