



## **RACE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

### **METRO HEALTH GRAND RAPIDS MARATHON**

#### **I. Services**

##### **PRE-RACE**

- a. Biomechanical Screening: offered by Metro Health Sports Medicine on Saturday from 9-6pm at the David D. Hunting YMCA. Assessment of foot types, footwear, and musculoskeletal discrepancies provided free to all participants on first-come, first-serve basis. Please bring your race and/or training shoes for evaluation.
- b. Preparation: for a marathon should be individualized to your level of competition. There are several training programs available, so choose wisely & appropriately.
- c. Proper footwear: is designed to fit your foot structure and function, so make sure you choose the correct shoe. Recommendations are to change to new shoes every 400-500 miles due to breakdown in the material. Race shoes should also be broken in several weeks before the actual race.
- d. Questions: regarding health problems should be addressed by your regular physician well in advance of race day.

##### **ON THE COURSE**

- a. Medical Stations: will be set up at every 1 to 1½ miles along the race course. They will be marked by a **ORANGE FLAG/SIGN**, and staff will be wearing orange jackets. First aid supplies, such as bandages and Vaseline, will be available at each aid station. Other emergency supplies will also be available if needed.
- b. Ambulances: will be standing by for anyone having life-threatening problems during the race. Paramedics on bicycles will patrol between aid stations for emergencies. If you see a fellow runner down on the course, please alert the nearest aid station.

##### **FINISH LINE**

- a. A medical tent will be marked at the Start/Finish line of the course and can provide medical services to injured participants. They will be watching for athletes displaying signs of medical problems. First aid and emergency medical supplies will be available on site.
- b. One ambulance will be present at the Start/Finish line that is dedicated for participants having trouble at the end of the race.

#### **II. Storm Safety Plan**

- a. Race Cancellation/Delay:
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- i. The start of the **Metro Health Grand Rapids Marathon** will be delayed up to 1 hour if any of the following weather conditions exist: **Tornado Watch, Thunderstorm/Lightening, "Heavy" Rain**
  - ii. This event will be canceled if one of the following weather conditions exist: **Tornado Warning, Severe Thunderstorm/Lightening**
- b. Authority to Cancel/Delay Race
  - i. The Race Director, in accordance with local law enforcement, has the authority to cancel/delay this event.
  - ii. If threatening weather conditions force cancellation of the event, no refunds can be provided, since funds were already spent in preparation for Race Day. T-shirts will be distributed.
- c. Cancellation/Delay Broadcast:
  - i. The media broadcasting the event and the event emcees will communicate any delay and/or cancellation of **Metro Health Grand Rapids Marathon**.
  - ii. Warnings regarding inclement weather will be reported to all medical staff via cell phone or two-way radio transmission.
  - iii. Ground Zero is located at the medical tent in the finish area and will be utilized to communicate the decision. If necessary, medical personnel will direct athletes and spectators to safer areas as instructed by the Race Director & law enforcement.

### III. Hydration

#### PRE-RACE

- a. **Early or excessive pre-race hydration is not recommended.** It may actually be harmful in some cases. Drink when you are thirsty during your training. Alternating water and sports drinks can be an effective way to replace both fluids and important electrolytes in the body.
- b. A hydration plan is important to prevent problems like dehydration and hyponatremia and knowing the warning signs for both is imperative. Several organizations, including the American Medical Athletic Association, have put together free brochures for runners on this very topic.
- c. While it is important to drink to replace lost fluids, it is also important never to over hydrate. You should estimate your body fluid loss by measuring your weight before and after your run. It is also good to average your hourly sweat loss by accounting for the amount of fluids you drank during that run. For example, if you lose 1 pound (1 pound = 16 oz of fluid loss) during an hour run, and you drink 12 oz. over the course of that run, you need to drink 28 oz. (16 + 12) for every hour that you perform activity at that same intensity. This can be replaced in small amounts over the course of the hour.
- d. Another way to monitor hydration status is to check your urine. If it is rather dark and almost tea-colored, this alludes to highly concentrated urine, and you may be dehydrated.

## **RACE DAY**

- a. Since it is difficult to predict who will have problems with dehydration, each individual must develop a hydration program specific to their needs. This should be incorporated into their training regimen well in advance of the race.
- b. It is important to drink water or sports drinks to replace lost fluids. However, over hydration can be a problem due to dilution effects and its association with low sodium. Remember to only drink when you are thirsty along the course.
- c. **Hyponatremia** (low blood sodium) can be a serious complication of running itself, or associated with over hydration while training for an endurance event. It is defined as a sodium level of less than 135 mEq/L. Symptoms of this disorder include: weight gain during activity, swelling of the hands and feet, headache, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, severe cramps, confusion and can even result in seizures, coma and death. This disorder has been more closely associated with high endurance athletes, those who restrict sodium in their diets or are taking non-steroidal anti-inflammatory regularly, beginner marathoners who over hydrate, and female gender. It can be prevented by being aware of the problem, developing a hydration plan, and by watching for signs and symptoms of over hydration.
- d. Pace yourself. Run at a pace that will allow you to finish the race.

## **POST-RACE**

- a. Again replacing any weight lost during the race is important. Your weight will be your key. Alternating water and sports drinks, as well as eating salty foods like pretzels or popcorn, are effective ways to rehydrate you and maintain proper electrolyte balance.
- b. Be aware of the warning signs of dehydration and hyponatremia.

## **IV. Race Day Weather**

### **COLD WEATHER**

- a. Since October can be quite cold in Michigan, it is important to wear appropriate clothing the day of the race.
- b. Extra gear can be left with friends or family members before the start of the event, but be sure to make plans for a meeting place afterwards.
- c. Mylar blankets will be handed out at the finish line to help maintain body heat. However, these provide limited conservation of core body temperature, so be sure to bring extra clothing.

### **WARM WEATHER**

- a. The weather can be unseasonably warm in Grand Rapids during the month of October. It is important to be aware of the weather forecast prior to race day and come prepared.
- b. Heat illness and heat stroke are always a risk with running endurance events, but warmer weather can add to that risk.

- c. Listen to your body and seek medical help if you experience any symptoms of weakness, dizziness, confusion, blurred vision, nausea and vomiting, or cramping, which can be associated with heat illnesses.

## **V. Race Finish**

- a. It will be helpful for you to continue walking after you finish the race to allow dispersed blood flow that has been directed to the muscles in your legs and arms to be redistributed to your core body and vital organs. This equilibration period is essential.
- b. Sitting or lying down is NEVER recommended immediately after a race.

## **VI. Race Participant Responsibilities**

- a. Consult your physician with any medical problems known prior to the race.
- b. Complete the Emergency Contact and Medical History portions on the back of your bib number.
- c. Listen to the weather forecast for the day of the race.
- d. Adjust and fine-tune your plan for race pace and hydration. This should be developed along with your training and established prior to the day of the race. However, you will need to constantly readjust your hydration activity based on weather and symptoms.
- e. Please ask for assistance during the race if you do not feel well.
- f. Please help your fellow runners during the race.

**...But most of all,**  
**HAVE A GREAT RACE ☺**