

Proper Hydration Basics

Symptoms Of Heat Exhaustion

Healthy individuals, while working or exercising in hot environments, may experience a form of shock brought about by fluid and salt loss. This occurs most commonly to persons not accustomed to hot weather, those who are overweight, and those who perspire excessively. The condition is known as heat exhaustion. Signs and symptoms include:

First symptoms: **drink water!**

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Dark yellow urine
- Fatigue
- Irritability

Life threatening symptoms: **go to the ER or contact your physician right away!**

- Dizziness
- Feeling of blacking out when sitting up or standing
- Confusion
- Muscle weakness or cramps
- Sunken eyes
- Low blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Moist, pale skin which may feel normal to cool
- Weak pulse
- Weakness or exhaustion



Tips To Stay Hydrated



- Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink; by this time you are already dehydrated.
- Carry a water bottle and drink from it regularly.
- Drink at least eight cups of water every day.
- Drink extra water in extreme heat to replace the water lost from sweating.
- Start and end the day with a cup of water.
- Although consumption of electrolyte drinks ("sports drinks") can help prevent dehydration, avoid drinking liquids that contain caffeine, alcohol, or large amounts of sugary sodas – these cause a loss in body fluids.
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight, light colored clothing.
- Eat small meals and eat more often. Avoid foods that are high in protein which can increase metabolic heat during the digestive process.
- Take a break in a cool environment, if possible.
- Know the symptoms of dehydration.

Tips for Cooling Off



Hats and helmets trap heat, so if you are wearing one, take it off (if possible and safe) during rest breaks to allow heat to escape. Think about wearing a wet towel or a cooling bandana on your neck.

What Is Dehydration?



The hydration status of a person refers to their body water balance. Dehydration occurs when people don't have enough fluid in their bodies. Many older people have problems with hydration. Dehydration is a serious problem and can result in death if it is not addressed, but dehydration is very easy to prevent.

Physical Changes That Impact Hydration



- The ability to feel thirst lessens with age, so older individuals may not realize when they need to consume fluids.
- Human bodies begin to lose muscle and gain fat as they age, and only muscle retains water.
- Medications that increase urination or help constipation can cause dehydration.
- Older adults may have to urinate more often, which causes a loss of fluids.

When A Coworker Becomes Ill Due To The Heat

- Call a supervisor for help. Call 911 if the person does not feel better within a few minutes.
- Have someone stay with the worker until help arrives.
- Move the worker to a cooler/shaded area.
- Loosen or remove tight outer clothing.
- Fan and mist the worker with water; apply ice.
- Provide cool drinking water.

Other Causes Of Dehydration



Dehydration can be caused by diarrhea, vomiting, overheating, diabetes, diuretic medications, high fever, or excessive sweating. If you have any of these conditions, be aware of the risk and drink plenty of fluids.

Dehydration can be prevented by simply drinking enough water!

