

Enjoy Summer!

Remember: Hydrate, Hydrate, Hydrate!

Did you know that usually by the time you realize you are thirsty you are already dehydrated? This is true, especially in the elderly population. This article will focus on dehydration as defined by free water loss that exceeds free water intake related to the hot Summer months.

Whether you are an adult exerting yourself in the hot, humid weather, or a child playing out in the yard, or an elderly adult sitting quietly in the house who does not recognize that they are thirsty - dehydration can happen to anyone. It can be serious, so protect yourself and those around you by focusing on hydration this Summer season!

According to **Wikipedia**:

In physiology, dehydration is a lack of total body water with an accompanying disruption of metabolic process. It occurs when free water loss exceeds free water intake, usually due to exercise, disease, or high environmental temperature.

According to **Mayo Clinic**:

Heat exhaustion is a condition that happens when your body overheats.

Possible heat exhaustion symptoms include:

- Cool, moist skin with goose bumps when in the heat.
- Heavy sweating.
- Faintness.
- Dizziness.
- Fatigue
- Weak, rapid pulse.
- Low blood pressure upon standing.
- Muscle cramps.
- Nausea.
- Headache

Heatstroke is a condition caused by your body overheating, usually as a result of prolonged exposure to or physical exertion in high temperatures. The condition is most common in the Summer months. Heatstroke requires emergency treatment. Untreated heatstroke can quickly damage your brain, heart, kidneys, and muscles. The damage worsens the longer treatment is delayed, increasing your risk of serious complications or death.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of dehydration are important to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Some of the signs and symptoms include: thirst, headaches, general discomfort, loss of appetite, nausea, decreased urine production, confusion, unexplained tiredness, seizures.

In the **elderly**, the decreased ability to recognize thirst or the inability to access sources of hydration seems to be the main causes of dehydration.

For **infants and children**, these are some signs of dehydration:

- dry tongue and dry lips.
- no tears when crying.
- sunken eyes.
- dry and wrinkled skin.
- deep, rapid breathing.
- cool and blotchy hands and feet.
- fewer than six wet diapers per day for infants, and no wet diapers or urination for eight hours in toddlers.



To help prevent dehydration in the Summer, Dr. Otenweller-Butcher with Cameron Family Medicine has the following advice:

- Take breaks when exercising
- Drink enough fluids, such as water or sports drinks, so you do not feel thirsty - Exercise early in the day before it gets too hot outside
- wear loose, lightweight clothing
- Avoid hot cars
- Additionally, keep a bottle of water with you during the day. Drink water before, during, and after a workout. When you're feeling hungry, drink water with food.
- Drink on a schedule - especially with children and elderly offer/assist with hydration throughout the day.
- Choose water!

The most effective treatment for minor dehydration is widely considered to be drinking water and reducing fluid loss.

For severe cases of dehydration, or if you have any doubt about the seriousness of the situation- **SEEK MEDICAL EMERGENCY TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY!**

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