

Summer Hydration Tips

Summertime brings outside games, yard work, camping, swimming, trips to the beach, and long bike rides beneath the summer sun. In the heat of all the fun, however, it's extremely important to pay close attention to your body, specifically when it comes to being hydrated. Average adults lose more than **ten cups** of fluids per day through sweat, breathing, and eliminating waste in addition to electrolytes that maintain the fluid balance in our bodies-- so it's up to us to restore them!

How do I know if I'm dehydrated?

- **Thirst:** Did you know that when you're thirsty, your body is already dehydrated?
- **Urine color:** The color of your urine tends to be the best gauge of your hydration status. A clear to light yellow color usually indicates that you're well hydrated, while a dark yellow or amber color is a good predictor of dehydration.
- **Dry or sticky mouth**
- **Headache**
- **Dizziness/lightheadedness**
- **Weakness**
- **Muscle cramps**
- **Feeling of tiredness**

Note: Feeling any of the above symptoms means you're already dehydrated, so don't wait for the signs to hydrate! Experiencing severe dehydration signs such as vomiting, low blood pressure, sunken eyes, fever, extreme thirst, little or no urination or lack of sweating may require medical assistance.

What should I hydrate with?

- **Water:** The beverage of choice if you are outside sweating for less than 60 minutes.
- **Sports Drinks:** If you are sweating for more than 60 minutes you may require a sports drink to replenish electrolytes. However, check with your doctor to see if this is appropriate for you, as some electrolytes can be detrimental to people with certain medical conditions.
- **Food:** Believe it or not, establishing a healthy diet that includes fruits and vegetables that have a high fluid content also contributes to about 20% of your body's fluids (the remaining 80% is from beverages). This may include lettuce, watermelon, broccoli, grapefruit and apples, just to name a few.
- **DRINK at least 8 glass of water or other non-alcoholic beverages per day especially during summer months when heat and humidity are high.**



What should I avoid?

- **Caffeine:** Caffeinated beverages like soda, coffee or tea, may have a mild diuretic effect, depending on the caffeine level.
- **Alcohol:** It is also smart to avoid alcoholic beverages which have a diuretic effect, causing your body to lose water.

As a rule of thumb, be proactive about hydrating yourself to avoid the first and most common sign of dehydration: **thirst**. Drink *before* you venture out into the heat, *during* your activities (which includes sunbathing!) and *after* to constantly replenish your fluid stores.