



THE DANGERS OF DEHYDRATION

- Water is one of the most important nutrients in your diet; you can survive for weeks without food, but only a few days without water.
- Drinking too little water, or not adequately replacing fluid lost through sweat, inhibits your ability to perform at your best.
- Not drinking enough can lead to dehydration. The risk for dehydration increases in hot, humid conditions or during a hard workout.
- If not corrected, dehydration can lead to serious, life-threatening complications.

Effects of Dehydration

Percent Dehydration	Effect/Symptoms
1%	Increased body temperature, thirst
2 – 5%	Impaired performance (20% decrease in endurance capacity), headache, fatigue, nausea, dry mouth, chills, clammy skin
6 – 8%	Increased body temperature, dizziness, weakness, gastrointestinal problems, heat exhaustion
Over 8%	Heat stroke- sweating stops, high temperature, hallucinations, disorientation, possible death

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

- At least 8 cups of fluid are needed daily to maintain normal body functions, for athletes and other active people, fluid needs are greater
- Replace fluid losses: weigh yourself before and after exercising. For each pound lost, drink at least 2 to 3 cups of fluid (16 to 24 ozs.). One “gulp” usually equals about 1 oz.
- Evaluate urine: You should make a trip to the bathroom every 2 to 4 hours. Urine should be pale yellow in color. Urine that is dark and concentrated (the color of apple juice) indicates dehydration. (Note that some vitamins and medications may cause urine to have a darker color)



WHAT COUNTS AS A FLUID?

Fluid choices can include:

Water

Milk

Juice

Smoothies

Coffee or Tea
(decaffeinated is best for hydration)

Fruit Drinks

Lemonade

Soups

Sports Drinks

Soft Drinks
(remember these are high
in calories and low in nutrition)

Diet Soft Drinks
(no nutritional value,
use in moderation)

ESPECIALLY FOR ATHLETES:

- Proper hydration enhances athletic performance; dehydration impairs performance
- Water is the beverage of choice for athletes
- If you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated; make sure to drink on schedule before, during, and after physical activity
- Sports drinks should be consumed during events lasting longer than 60 minutes
- Sodas and fruit juice are O.K. in moderation, but their high sugar content makes them a poor choice for fluid replacement

Sources: Nancy Clark's Sports Nutrition Guidebook: Eating to Fuel your Active Lifestyle, 2nd ed., Nancy Clark, M.S.,R.D., SportsMedicine Brookline, 1997.

Fuel for Young Athletes: Essential Foods and Fluids for Future Champions, Ann Litt, M.S.,R.D., Human Kinetics, 2004.