



**Dehydration** is when the body loses too much water and needed minerals (electrolytes).

## Signs & Symptoms

### For Severe Dehydration

- Severe thirst (sometimes).
- Sunken and dry eyes. Tearless eyes. (Infants may not show this sign.)
- Dry mouth, tongue, and lips.
- No urine or a low amount of urine that is dark yellow.
- Sunken fontanelle (the soft spot on an infant's head).
- Headache. Feeling lightheaded, especially when getting up quickly.
- Dry skin that doesn't spring back when pinched.
- Feeling dizzy. Confusion. Severe weakness.
- Increase in breathing and heart rate.

## Dehydration

### Causes

- The body does not get enough fluids for its needs.
- Too much water or other body fluids and electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium, are lost. This can result from: Repeated episodes of diarrhea and/or vomiting; heavy sweating; heat exhaustion; or heat stroke.

### Treatment

Fluids and electrolytes must be replaced. If this can't be done by mouth, they are given through an IV solution.

### Questions to Ask

Do any of these problems occur?

- **Signs of severe dehydration** listed at left.
- A child or person has been left in a hot car or other hot, enclosed place and has any of the signs listed at left.
- After being in hot conditions, 2 or more **signs of heat exhaustion** listed at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com) occur.



### Self-Care / First Aid

- If vomiting isn't present, adults and children over age 12 should drink about 2 cups of fluid per hour. Fluids of choice are: Sports drinks; flat cola; clear sodas; broths; popsicles; and gelatin.
- If you have high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, or a history of stroke, you should find out what fluids your doctor prefers you take when you need to replace lost fluids.
- For children under 2 years old, consult your child's doctor about the amount and type of fluid to give. Ask your child's doctor about using over-the-counter products that give fluid and electrolytes. Examples are Pedialyte and Infalyte.
- For children over 2 years old, give up to 1½ quarts of fluid per day.