



Dehydration

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.

Causes

- The body does not get enough fluids for it's 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 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 $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts of fluid per day.