Stay Hydrated: Tips and Risk Factors

Drink Plenty of Fluids in Hot Weather

- You need to drink more, regardless of how active you are. Rule of thumb: drink before you are thirsty.
- Avoid alcohol or drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar—these can cause you to lose more fluid.[1]
- If you are on water pills or your doctor has asked you to limit your water intake, speak with them about the best plan for you during hot weather.[3]

How Much Should I Drink?

- For moderate activity level for two hours or less, drink one cup (8 ounces) of water every 15–20 minutes, or about 24–32 ounces per hour.
- Drinking more often is better than drinking large amounts less often.[2] For longer periods of time, you might want to drink a low-sugar sports drink to replace salts lost through sweat.[3]

TIP: If you have trouble remembering to drink water throughout the day, set alarms on your phone, or consider downloading an app to help you track your drinking. Look for an app that accounts for physical activity, like sports or moderate-to-heavy labor outdoors.[3]

Replace Salt and Minerals

- Sweating removes salt and minerals from your body. Drinking low-sugar sports drinks or balanced electrolyte drinks or mixes can help replace salt and minerals.3 You also might consider making your own—there are many recipes online!
- Speak with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage or taking salt tablets if you are on a low-salt diet, or have diabetes, high blood pressure, or other chronic conditions.[3]

Who is at Risk?

Infants and Children Under 2

Children are vulnerable to heat-related illness because they need others to ensure their well-being during hot weather.

Do This

Check on infants and young children, and make sure they are staying cool and hydrated. See that they're getting plenty to drink and avoiding drinks that contain a lot of sugar or drinks that are very cold.

People with Chronic Medical Conditions

People with chronic medical conditions are more vulnerable to extreme heat for several reasons. Chronic illnesses including heart disease, mental illness, poor blood circulation and obesity are all risk factors for heat-related illness.[4] These conditions may make individuals less likely or less able to sense and respond to temperature changes, or people with these conditions may have to take medications that can affect heat-related symptoms, including dehydration.

Do This

Talk to your doctor. Heavy sweating can remove salt and minerals from your body, and having a plan for replacing salt and minerals lost through sweating is important—particularly if your medical condition or medications affect your body's salt balance.

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Older Adults 65+

People who are 65 and older are more likely to experience heat-related health issues, including dehydration because they are more likely to have chronic medical conditions or take medications that change how the body responds to heat or affect the body's ability to control temperature and sweating.

Do This

Drink more water than usual. If your doctor has asked you to limit the amount of fluid you drink, or if you are taking water pills, speak with your doctor about how much to drink during hot weather. [5]

Outdoor Workers and Athletes

People who work outside may need to take extra precautions to stay hydrated.

Do This

For workplace guidance, Washington state employers and employees should review Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Outdoor Heat Exposure Rules at lni.wa.gov.

Athletes exercising in the heat should also take hydration into account. Muscle cramping can be an early sign of heat-related illness—and a reminder to stay ahead of your hydration needs.

Do This

Drink more liquids than normal, and drink before you are thirsty.[6]

Pregnant Women

Pregnant women are more likely to become dehydrated and less able to cool off through sweating. Their bodies have to work harder to cool themselves and the unborn baby.

Do This

Speak with your doctor about how to stay hydrated while also replacing salt and minerals lost through sweating.[7]

1 "Tips for Preventing Heat-Related Illness," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated August 16, 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heattips.html.

2 "Heat Stress – Hydration," National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2017-126, accessed May 23, 2023, https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/userfiles/works/pdfs/2017-126.pdf.

3 "Heat Stress – Recommendations," National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated June 6, 2018, https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress/recommendations.html.

4 "Heat and People with Chronic Medical Conditions," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated June 19, 2017, https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/medical.html.

5 "Heat and Older Adults," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated June 19, 2017, https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/older-adults-heat.html.

6 "Heat and Athletes," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated June 19, 2019, https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/athletes.html.

7 "Heat and Pregnant Women," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, updated August 25, 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_and_pregnant_women.html.

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