

Liquefy your Success?

As the summer months approach, so does the heat. And with the heat comes longer days at the beach and various water and sport activities. Staying cool and well hydrated should be a top priority for children and adults alike. A common health risk that is often overlooked is dehydration and heat illness. With all of this fun in the sun, it's easy to forget to drink enough water. Dehydration cannot only lead to health issues such as heat illness but can also affect your work and sports performance.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Thirst is not always a sufficient indicator of hydration. In fact, strong thirst may be a sign that you are already 2-3 % dehydrated.
- 1% level of dehydration can decrease athletic performance.
- 3% could put you in the high risk zone!

More often than not, we don't drink nearly enough water, let alone consume enough electrolytes to keep a healthy fluid balance – especially when we are busy doing other things. The amount of water and electrolytes we lose often exceeds the amount of fluid we drink. We lose our bodily fluids through everyday activities such as sweating, going to the bathroom, and even breathing. The more liquid that is lost, the thicker the blood becomes and the harder the heart has to work to pump blood to the body. This causes an increased chance of health risks such as fatigue, tiredness, headaches, lack of concentration, dizziness, constipation, digestive problems, dehydration and even heat illness and cramping.

SWEAT = Fluid Loss → Dehydration → Heat Illness

Think you're consuming enough liquids?

Did you know that your daily cup of Joe or your afternoon energy drink are actually depleting fluids? These liquids contain caffeine and processed sugars that can contribute to dehydration, leaving your tank empty when you want to perform your best or enjoying activities you love.

Warning Signs of Dehydration:

- Increased thirst
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness
- Muscle cramps
- Dry skin
- Tired or sleepy
- Decreased urine output
- Urine is low volume and more yellowish than normal

Heat Illness in Athletes

Among the negative effects of dehydration is heat illness. The risk of heat illness is even greater in places where there is high humidity such as our very own state of Florida. Athletes typically practice and compete outdoors for hours and are at risk for developing signs of dehydration as well as heat illness and cramping. But don't be fooled, athletes competing indoors are at just as much risk for developing dehydration and even heat illness and cramping because the body is still generating heat and losing fluids from high levels of activities. Additionally, children and the elderly are at higher risk for developing heat illness.

Common symptoms of heat illness are headaches, dizziness, muscle fatigue, dry mouth, thirst and muscle cramps. If heat illness is not addressed in a timely manner it can lead to more serious conditions such as heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

So what's the take home message? Come prepared to play and take steps to prevent dehydration and heat illness.

Before Play:

- Check color of urine, it should be pale yellow.
- Drink plenty of fluids (water, juice, coconut water, electrolyte drink such as Vega Sport Hydrator) throughout the day.
- If you sweat a lot and are prone to muscle cramping, add some extra salt to your food (either during your meals or by adding salt/GatorLytes to your sport drink in training before competition.)
- Don't forget to drink fluid regularly during your warm-up and drink 1 cup of sports drink/water 10 minutes prior to starting practice or competition.

During Play:

- Fluid consumption should include a sport drink and water.
- Drink throughout practice and competition about 1-1.5 liters or 20-24 oz. per hour.
- Avoid carbonated drinks; they can make you feel full and uncomfortable.
- Move out of the sun into the shade when possible.
- If playing in the heat, cool down with ice bags or X-temp vest under armpits and on your lap/between your legs for quickest results, Check out link to learn more: <http://xtemp.myshopify.com/collections/performance>.
- Change into dry clothes when possible.

After Play:

- Begin re-hydrating right away.
- Drink 20-24 oz. of fluid per 1 pound of weight loss to make up for fluid that is lost during play. This is equal to replacing 1.3-1.5 liters of fluid for every 1 kg weight lost.
- Sweat a lot or prone to muscle cramping? Adding salt to your food or salt/GatorLytes to a sport drink (1/8-1/4 tsp. per 20 oz.) can be effective for an athlete who needs to aggressively replace fluid and sodium.
- Eat high carbohydrate, moderate protein snack or meal (3:1 or 4:1 ratio) within 20-30 minutes after play.
- Shower and get out of wet clothes as soon as possible.
- Cool down and stretch.

Don't let dehydration or heat illness affect your performance or your health – be proactive today!

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