

Dehydration

Baylor SportsCare

We'll give you a healthy advantage.

Baylor SportsCare provides the winning combination of education, prevention, medical coverage and sports medicine for athletes of all ages.

- Access Baylor Health Care System specialized sports medicine physicians* and services throughout the Metroplex
- Medical coverage at games and events utilizing physicians, nurses and licensed athletic trainers
- Educational programs on injury prevention & performance enhancement
- Comprehensive medical support for groups, teams and individuals

For more information about SportsCare, or for help in finding a physician who is right for you, contact your local SportsCare representative at

(469) 814-2165

or call **1-800-4BAYLOR** and ask for "Baylor SportsCare"

*Physicians are members of the medical staff at one of Baylor Health Care System's subsidiary, community or affiliated medical centers and are neither employees nor agents of those medical centers, Baylor University Medical Center or Baylor Health Care System. CE 12.07

Definition

Dehydration can be a serious heat-related disease, as well as being a dangerous side effect of diarrhea, vomiting, and fever. Children and persons over the age of 60 are particularly susceptible to dehydration.

Causes

Under normal conditions, we all lose body water daily through sweat, tears, breathing, urine, and stool. In a healthy person, this water is replaced by drinking fluids and eating foods that contain water. When a person becomes so sick with fever, diarrhea, or vomiting, or if an individual is overexposed to the sun and not drinking enough water, dehydration occurs. This is caused when the body loses water content and essential body salts, such as sodium, potassium, calcium bicarbonate, and phosphate.

Occasionally, dehydration can be caused by drugs, such as diuretics, which deplete body fluids and electrolytes. Whatever the cause, dehydration should be treated as soon as possible.

Symptoms

- Thirst
- Less-frequent urination
- Dry skin
- Fatigue
- Light-headedness
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Dry mouth and mucous membranes
- Increased heart rate and breathing

In children, additional symptoms may include:

- Dry mouth and tongue
- No tears when crying
- No wet diapers for more than three hours
- Sunken abdomen, eyes, or cheeks
- High fever
- Listlessness
- Irritability
- Skin that does not flatten when pinched and released

The symptoms of dehydration may resemble other medical conditions or problems. Always consult your doctor for a diagnosis.

Treatment

If caught early, dehydration can often be treated at home under a physician's guidance. In children, directions for giving food and fluids will differ according to the cause of the dehydration, so it is important to consult your child's doctor.

In cases of mild dehydration, simple rehydration is recommended by drinking fluids. Many sports drinks on the market effectively restore body fluids, electrolytes, and salt balance.

For moderate dehydration, intravenous (IV) fluids may be required, although, if caught early enough, simple rehydration may be effective. Cases of serious dehydration should be treated as a medical emergency, and hospitalization, along with intravenous fluids, is necessary. Immediate action should be taken.



Prevention

Take precautionary measures to avoid the harmful effects of dehydration, including the following:

- Drink plenty of fluids during outdoor activities, especially on hot days. Water and sports drinks are the drinks of choice. Avoid caffeinated tea, coffee, soda, and alcohol, as these can lead to dehydration.
- Make sure you are taking in more fluid than you are losing.
- Try to schedule physical outdoor activities for the cooler parts of the day.
- Drink appropriate sports drinks to help maintain electrolyte balance.
- For infants and young children, solutions such as Pedialyte will help maintain electrolyte balance during illness or heat exposure. Do not try to make fluid and salt solutions at home for children.

