



your health & well-being

Hot weather? It's important to stay hydrated

Why do we get dehydrated?

Dehydration occurs when your body loses too much fluid. This can happen when you don't drink enough water, or if you lose large amounts of fluid because of diarrhea, vomiting, sweating, or exercise.

And why is that important?

Not drinking enough fluids can cause muscle cramps, and you may feel faint or dizzy. Usually your body will just reabsorb fluid from your blood and other body tissues. However, if you become severely dehydrated you no longer have enough fluid to get blood to your organs and you may go into shock, which is a life-threatening condition.

Dehydration can occur in anyone at any age, but it is most dangerous for babies, small children, and older adults.

Stay hydrated as you exercise

Most people lose as much as 1-2 quarts of fluid during one hour of exercise. When you are not drinking enough fluids your muscles tire more quickly, and you may get leg cramps while walking or running.

An athlete can lose as much as 3 quarts of fluid per hour during an intense workout.

- Endurance activities such as distance running, cycling, strenuous hiking, or cross-country skiing can cause severe fluid loss. These types of activities can also lead to heat exhaustion.

Distance runners and other endurance athletes are not the only ones to have problems with dehydration. Football, basketball, and hockey players may lose large amounts of fluid during a game. High school and college wrestlers often decrease their fluid intake and intentionally promote excessive sweating before a match in order to "make weight."

What you can do about it

- To avoid dehydration during hot weather and exercise, drink eight to ten glasses of fluid (water or rehydration drinks) each day.
 - Drink extra water before, during, and after exercise.
 - Take a container of water or sports drink with you when you exercise, and try to drink at least every 15 to 20 minutes.
 - Use a sports drink if you will be exercising for longer than one hour.
- Encourage your child to drink extra fluids or suck on Popsicles. Children between the ages of four and ten should drink at least six glasses of liquids to replace lost fluids.
- Limit coffee, colas, or other drinks that contain caffeine. They increase urine output and may dehydrate you faster.
- Alcoholic drinks, including beer and wine, can increase dehydration.
- Do not take salt tablets. Use a sports drink if you are concerned about replacing minerals lost through sweating.
- Stop working outdoors or exercising if you feel dizzy, lightheaded, or very tired. Move to a cooler place inside or in the shade, and make sure to drink plenty of cool liquids.
- In very hot or dry weather and at high elevations, exercise early in the day or later in the evening when it is cooler.

Source: *Healthwise*®



"CIGNA," "CIGNA HealthCare" and the "Tree of Life" logo are registered service marks of CIGNA Intellectual Property, Inc., licensed for use by CIGNA Corporation and its operating subsidiaries. All products and services are provided exclusively by such operating subsidiaries and not by CIGNA Corporation. Such operating subsidiaries include Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Tel-Drug, Inc. and its affiliates, CIGNA Behavioral Health, Inc., Intracorp, and HMO or service company subsidiaries of CIGNA Health Corporation and CIGNA Dental Health, Inc. In Arizona, HMO plans are offered by CIGNA HealthCare of Arizona, Inc. In California, HMO plans are offered by CIGNA HealthCare of California, Inc. and Great-West Healthcare of California, Inc. In Connecticut, HMO plans are offered by CIGNA HealthCare of Connecticut, Inc. In Virginia, HMO plans are offered by CIGNA HealthCare Mid-Atlantic, Inc. In North Carolina, HMO plans are offered by CIGNA HealthCare of North Carolina, Inc. All other medical plans in these states are insured or administered by Connecticut General Life Insurance Company.