

Dehydration

Dehydration is when a person's body does not have enough fluids. Your body needs water to work properly. To keep enough fluid in your body cells, your cells 'drink' fluid from your blood. Your blood needs fluid to keep it moving around your body and organs.



What to Expect

Causes of Dehydration

You can get dehydrated if you:

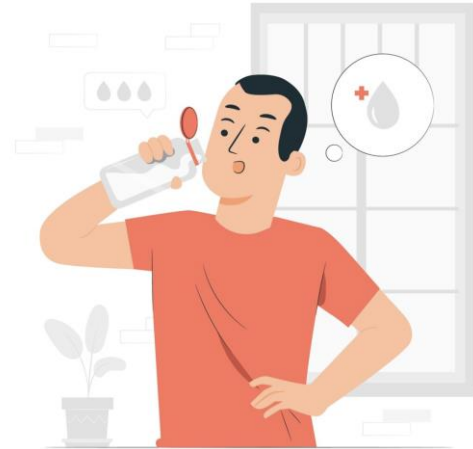
- Do not drink enough water.
- Stop drinking liquids.
- Lose a lot of fluids from:
 - + Sweating a lot (e.g., from a fever or hot weather)
 - + Vomiting
 - + Diarrhea
 - + Urinating often
 - + Doing heavy exercise

Symptoms

The first sign of being dehydrated is being thirsty. Sometimes people do not notice they are thirsty. Other people may notice they are thirsty, but they drink fluids like coffee, tea, or alcohol. These fluids cause you to get more dehydrated.

Signs of becoming dehydrated

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Headache
- Feeling tired confused and jittery
- Cramping in your muscles, especially in your legs
- Urine is darker than usual
- Dizziness when you stand up or sit up
- Decreased appetite



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Recommended Follow-Up

- Follow up in __ days.
Name of Provider
Reason
Date/Time
Location
Contact Info
- _____
- _____

Signs Dehydration Is Getting Worse

- Your mouth and eyes are really dry.
- You feel dizzy, lightheaded or like you are going to faint.
- You are not able to think clearly.
- You urinate (pee) very little or do not go for 8 hours or more.



When to Get Help

Go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if:

- You are not acting like yourself.
- Your heartbeat is very fast (more than 120 beats per minute).
- You are not responding to others.
- You are very pale or have blue lips or earlobes.
- You feel lightheaded or dizzy and it does improve when you lie down.
- You feel like you are going to faint, or you have fainted.
- You feel restless or confused.
- Your breathing is fast and shallow.
- Your skin is cool and damp to the touch. You may be sweating a lot.
- You feel very weak and shaky.
- You are very thirsty, and your mouth and eyes are very dry.
- You feel very sick to your stomach or cannot stop throwing up.
- Your urine is dark, or you haven't gone pee in 12 hours.
- Your vomit looks bloody (or coffee grounds in your vomit) or your poo looks bloody/black.

You may need to stay in the hospital and get fluids through an intravenous ('intra' meaning 'into' and 'venous' meaning 'vein' or into a vein, commonly called an IV).

Go to a walk-in clinic, or your health care provider or call 811 (711) if:

- You are having trouble drinking the water you need because you feel too sick.
- Your headache gets worse.
- You are not able to take your medicines because you feel too sick.
- You do not feel better in 3 days.
- You have any questions or concerns.

To Learn More:

- Ask your health care provider.
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca.



How to Care for Yourself at Home

You need to keep yourself hydrated. Here are a few things you can do:

Drink Liquids

- Drink water, ginger ale, or sports drinks. Take small sips often. Do not drink a whole glass at once. Try drinking liquids that are at room temperature or warm. This can help an upset stomach.
- Electrolyte drinks and oral rehydration solutions may help. Consult your doctor or dietician before trying these options.
- Take medicines with water.
- **DO NOT** drink anything that has caffeine in it. Examples of caffeine drinks are coffee, tea, colas, and energy drinks. These cause you to go pee more often.
- **DO NOT** drink alcohol, including beer and wine. These also cause dehydration.
- Initially, avoid foods that are high in fiber until your body returns to a well-hydrated state.

How To Prevent Dehydration

Here are a few things that you can do to stop getting dehydrated:

- Drink four to eight glasses of water each day.
- Drink water before, during and after exercise or heavy work.
- Drink small sips of water often when you are not feeling well.
- If you do drink fluids with caffeine or alcohol, make sure to drink equal amounts of water.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables that are rich in water content (e.g., oranges, watermelon, cucumbers, lettuce).
- Pay attention to your urine. If there are small amounts, or it is a dark colour, drink more fluids.

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Find this information sheet on the ECBC website:

https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/dehydration/

Additional Information

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