

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH CENTER

-HEALTHBERRY-

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DEHYDRATION

Dehydration is the loss of water and essential body salts. Water accounts for about 60% of total body weight. Water needs to be kept in fairly narrow limits to maintain cells and body tissue. The signs and symptoms of dehydration are: dry mouth and tongue; decreased or absent urination; sunken eyes; wrinkled skin; dizziness; confusion; coma; low blood pressure; severe thirst; and increase in heart rate and breathing.

The major causes of dehydration are persistent vomiting or diarrhea from any cause; persistent high fever, heaving sweating use of diuretics; or overexposure to sun or heat. The risk of dehydration increases with recent illness with high fever, diabetes mellitus or chronic kidney disease. Preventive measures include obtaining medical treatment for underlying causes of dehydration. If you are vomiting or have diarrhea, take small amounts of liquid with non-prescription electrolyte supplements or drinks such as Gatorade every 30 to 60 minutes. If you use diuretics, weigh daily. Report a weight loss of more than 4 pounds in 1 day. Remember that dehydration is particularly dangerous in babies and the elderly. Shock and death can occur from severe dehydration

Treatment may include blood counts, and electrolyte measurements. Electrolytes play an essential role in all body function. The major electrolytes are: sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and carbon dioxide. Electrolytes come from food. Mostly the kidneys and lungs regulate them. Hospitalization for intravenous fluids may be required for severe or prolonged cases.

Notify the Health Center if you have symptoms of dehydration.

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



Healthfully yours,

Dr. Healthberry

For questions or comments you can;

Write "Healthberry" at
University Health Center
Houston, Texas 77204-3019

E-Mail "Healthberry" at JMGray2@central.uh.edu
Fax "Healthberry" at (713)743-5164. 100 UH Health Center