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## What Happens to Your Body When You're Dehydrated | Dr. Mercola | November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### What Is Dehydration?

Water makes up at least two-thirds of the human body. It plays a large part in your normal functions, such as lubricating your joints and eyes, keeping your skin healthy by eliminating toxins, and facilitating proper digestion. Once the water in your body is reduced, it needs to be replaced because an imbalance between the salts and sugar in your body can affect the way you will perform. If your body has lost one to two percent of its entire water content, you will feel thirsty, a sign that you need to replenish the lost liquids. Dehydration happens when you've lost too much water in your body without replacing it, preventing your body to perform its normal functions. Mild dehydration can easily be treated but if it reaches extreme levels, it can be life-threatening and will require immediate medical attention.

### Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

#### Mild to Moderate Dehydration

Dry, sticky mouth  
Sleepiness or tiredness  
Dry skin  
Headache  
Constipation  
Dizziness or lightheadedness  
Few or no tears when crying  
Minimal urine  
Dry, cool skin  
Muscle cramps

#### Severe Dehydration

Extreme thirst  
Irritability and confusion  
Sunken eyes  
Dry skin that doesn't bounce back when you pinch it  
Low blood pressure  
Rapid heartbeat  
Rapid breathing  
No tears when crying  
Fever  
Little or no urination, and any urine color that is darker than usual  
In serious cases, delirium or unconsciousness

Infants are more vulnerable to dehydration, that's why immediate attention must be given to them especially if you see these symptoms:

- Sunken soft spot (fontanelle) on their head
- Few or no tears when they cry
- Dry mouth
- Few wet diapers
- Drowsiness
- Fast breathing

Chronic dehydration may affect your organs and lead to kidney stones, cholesterol problems, constipation, and liver, joint, and muscle damage.

Whether it is mild, moderate, or severe dehydration, the lost liquids in your body must be immediately replaced. If you start to develop severe diarrhea with or without vomiting, fever, moderate diarrhea for 24 hours, bloody stool, or you can't drink any liquids, you must get professional treatment as soon as possible.

### What Causes Dehydration?

There are various reasons for dehydration like intense physical activity, which makes you lose so much water – fat and calories are counted as well – so proper hydration is necessary. Other causes of dehydration include:

- **Diarrhea.** It prevents your intestinal tract from absorbing water from the foods that you eat, which makes it the most common cause of dehydration.
- **Vomiting.** Common causes include foodborne illnesses, nausea, and alcohol poisoning.
- **Sweating.** Vigorous sweating may happen due to various reasons like fever and engaging in intense physical activity. Profuse sweating can also occur when you are working in a hot condition.
- **Diabetes.** Aside from having high blood sugar levels, some medications for diabetes like diuretics may cause diabetics to frequently urinate.
- **Frequent urination.** It can be caused by alcohol and certain drugs like antihistamines, blood pressure medications, and antipsychotics.

### Who Is at Risk of Dehydration?

While everyone is prone to dehydration, there are people who are at a high risk for it like those who engage in mountain climbing. It is especially hard for hikers to stay hydrated because the pressure in high altitude places makes them lose more sweat and breathe harder. The increased gas exchange causes your body to lose more water vapor.

Athletes, particularly those who are involved in marathons, triathlons, and cycling tournaments, are also predisposed to dehydration. The longer they exercise, the more they lose water in their bodies.

Infants and children are especially prone to dehydration since their bodies are composed of 70 percent and 65 percent water, respectively. Since their bodies are more vulnerable to water depletion, their need for water is greater than adults.

Elderly people are also at risk for dehydration since the thirst mechanism weakens as a person grows older. According to BBC News, research revealed that one in five seniors is not getting enough water every day, as aging causes people to lose their sense of thirst mainly because of minimal social contact or forgetfulness. Those with dementia were found to have a six-fold increased risk for dehydration.

Ill-stricken people, like those who are afflicted with kidney disease, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, and adrenal gland disorders, are also more prone to dehydration. Alcoholics may also be susceptible to this condition.

### Drinking Sports Drinks Will Not Keep You Hydrated

Sports drink is one of the highly commercialized beverages today – from its TV advertisements to its popular athlete endorsers – as mainstream media makes it look like drinking it will keep you healthy and well-hydrated. Beverage companies advertise that sports drink will help replenish the electrolytes in your body during exercise or outdoor activities, but the truth is the ingredients of your favorite sports drinks will not hydrate and benefit you, and may even be detrimental to your health.

A typical sports drink contains high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and artificial sweeteners. It has two-thirds of the sugar content of soda, and is 30 times more erosive to your teeth than water. High-fructose corn syrup could cause negative health impacts like preventing the natural production of your body's human growth hormone (HGH). It also contributes to almost all chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

Aside from sports drinks, there are also other sweetened beverages that you don't benefit much from, like sodas. These are also equally unhealthy for your health, as just a 20-ounce bottle of cola gives you 16 teaspoons of sugar through high-fructose corn syrup. Diet soda makes no difference either because a study revealed that diet soda drinkers have a 70 percent increase in waist size than those non-diet soda drinkers in a 10-year period.

Commercial fruit juices are another sweetened drink that you must avoid because they do not have any hydrating properties and are actually loaded with sugar. For example, Minute Maid's 15.2 ounce bottle actually contains 49 grams of sugar.

### Choose to Drink Living Water

I advise you to avoid drinking tap water at all costs as it contains fluoride, heavy metals, and disinfection byproducts that may have ill effects on your health. Install a water filter in your home to ensure that these harmful contaminants are strained.