

8 Times 8! 8 Ounces of Water 8 Times a Day to Maintain Healthy Levels of Hydration during the Hottest Summer Months

To avoid problems caused by insufficient hydration, consider these tips.

Don't wait until you're thirsty! Physiologists say that once your mouth becomes dry, the efficient use of your muscles has already been impacted. Keep in front of your thirst by drinking water before expending energy in the heat.

Muscles benefit from electrolyte-laden sports drinks such as Gatorade. These drinks replenish minerals lost through sweat and urination.

Juice is another good option in getting your 64 ounces a day. Just make sure you are consuming no-added sugar juices.

Avoid alcohol and caffeine if you're going to be outdoors in high heat. Both are diuretics and can speed up dehydration.

Maintain a diet rich in fruits and vegetables which contain a large percentage of healthy liquid. If you must have protein, select lighter cuts such as white-meat chicken and turkey or fish. Avoid any type of fried foods if you're going to be playing or working in the sun.

Failure to adequately hydrate can lead to dehydration and heat exhaustion or stroke.

Symptoms of dehydration include dry mouth, increased thirst, fatigue, decreased urine output which is darker in color than usual, headache, dry skin (no sweat despite feeling hot) and dizziness.

Evidence of more severe dehydration and heat stroke are no sweat, no urine, lightheadedness, rapid heart rate, lethargy and confusion. Seizures and shock indicate heat stroke and require immediate emergency medical treatment.

Prevent the complications of dehydration by drinking up, even if you're not feeling thirsty.

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