

Health Unit Media Release



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Staying Well-Hydrated in Extreme Heat

In extreme heat, the body loses more fluid through sweat. It becomes even more important to drink enough fluid to help avoid the health risks of extreme heat, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

How do I know if I am drinking enough fluid?

On a daily basis, the easiest way to tell if you are drinking enough fluid is to check the color and amount of your urine. If your urine is dark and has a strong odour, it is concentrated with wastes and you need to drink more fluids. If you are urinating less often, this can also be a sign that your body needs more water. When your urine is pale yellow, your body has returned to its normal water balance.

As well as watching urine color and volume, you should also pay attention to how you feel. **Signs of dehydration** include fatigue, headaches, dizziness, nausea, dry mouth & lips, and having low energy. If you are thirsty, this is one of the last signs of dehydration – you need to drink before you feel thirst.

How can I consume more fluid?

The best choices for replacing sweat losses and staying well hydrated include:

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit juices
- Carbonated water
- Watery foods such as watermelon, grapes, soups, applesauce
- Sports drinks or soft drinks – but these can be high in sugar and caffeine (which dehydrates the body)
- Watery “treats” such as jello, popsicles, and freezies

Avoid drinks that contain high amounts of **caffeine**, including coffee, tea, dark soft drinks, and some sports drinks. Caffeine is a diuretic, and may lead to increased urination and fluid loss from the body. Also, avoid **alcohol**, which can also lead to fluid loss from the body (extra fluid is used when the body tries to rid itself of the alcohol).

It is recommended to avoid strenuous exercise in extreme heat conditions. When doing any physical exertion, make sure to drink fluid before, during, and after the activity. Loss of sweat even during activity is loss of fluid from the body.

For more information on staying well hydrated, contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit’s Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 or 345-5685 and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

Some excerpts from Nancy Clark’s Sport Nutrition Guidebook, 3rd edition (2003).