



SAFETY TOPIC: WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE!

In many parts of the United States, you don't have to be in the months of June or July to feel the effects of heat and dehydration. Many factors can play into your balance of fluid intake. Did you know that many people neglect fluid intake on cool days because they don't feel as hot or thirsty?

It is very important that you pay attention how you can prevent dehydration by knowing the signs and symptoms.

It turns out that water is the most important sports accessory. Dehydration can occur in as little as 30 minutes of exercise, particularly in the heat. This is one of the symptoms of heat exhaustion, which causes an average 452 deaths annually. Those numbers raise during heat waves.

Signs of Dehydration

- dizziness and light-headedness
- nausea and headaches
- muscle cramps
- increase in body temp (which can lead to heat exhaustion)

So what can you do to prevent this?

The American College of Sports Medicine encourages frequent drinking before, during, and after training or competition to prevent dehydration and heat stress. It is amazing to realize that 55 percent of our blood volume is water and constitutes 34% of our total body weight.

Here are some other tips to avoiding dehydration:

- Drink beyond your thirst
 - Don't rely only on your thirst to tell you to drink - if you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated
 - Drink before you get thirsty.
- Thirst is deceptive - quenching thirst doesn't completely replace lost fluids under extreme conditions.
- A good rule is to drink one water bottle (22 oz, 0.65L) of water or sports drink each hour while biking, for example, or 4 quarts (3.8L) a day.
 - We typically recommend a balance of water and a sports drink.
 - Look for safety topic on hyponatremia
- Drink frequently on your bike. I have my heart rate monitor set to beep every 15 minutes to remind me to drink.
- Your urine should be clear or light colored - if it is dark or you're urinating less - you need to drink more.
- Coffee, tea & alcoholic drinks are not the same as water, they cause you to lose fluid

- Don't take salt tablets. Formerly believed to replace salt lost through sweat, salt tablets only accelerate dehydration.
- Take frequent breaks, especially in the heat of summer.
- Take along more than one water bottle and stop to fill it up as you drink or use a hydration pack (such as a Camelback).
- If you have to get up once in the middle of the night to urinate, you're probably staying well hydrated.

There are also simple tests that you can do to test your fluid balance for your workouts.