

Fieldcraft Skills

Field First Aid



Preventing Dehydration

Monitoring the color of your urine is an effective method to determine if you have sufficient fluid intake. Sufficient intake of clear fluids - and water in particular - is the single best method of preventing dehydration.

What is dehydration?

When you lose more fluid thru sweat than you take in, the result is dehydration.

Signs of dehydration include:

- ☐ increased thirst
- ☐ headaches
- ☐ muscle cramps
- ☐ weakness
- ☐ dry lips
- ☐ dizziness and confusion
- ☐ dark colored urine
- ☐ strong odor to urine
- ☐ decrease in urine output

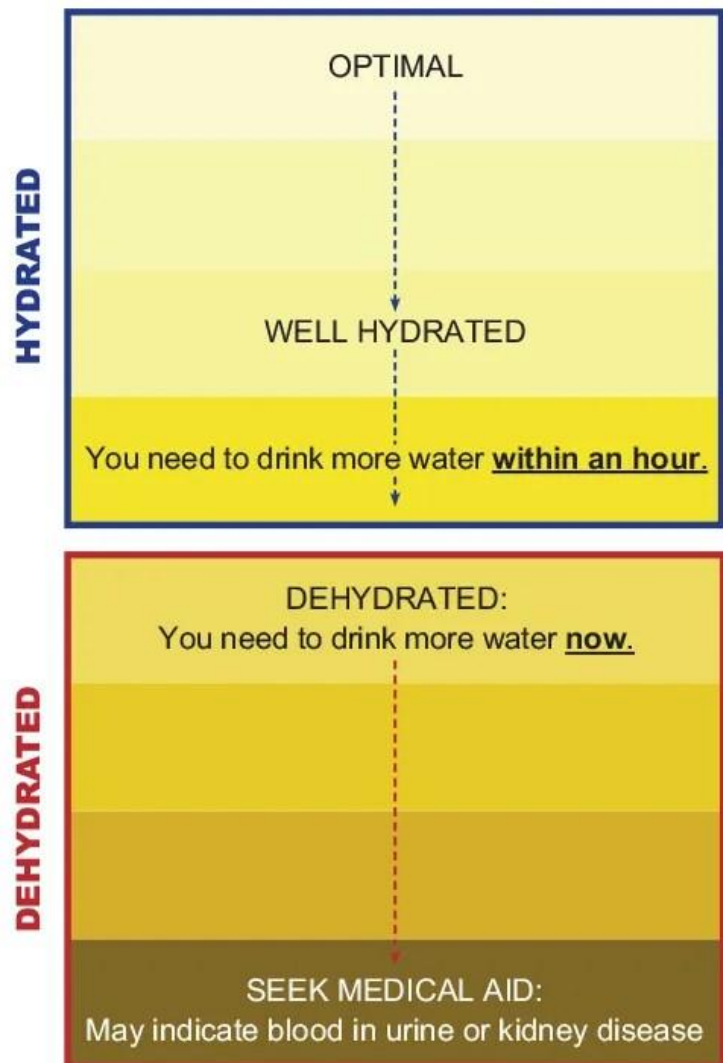
Treating dehydration:

- ☐ drinking plenty of fluids
- ☐ rest in a shaded area
- ☐ rest in an air-conditioned building if available

How to avoid dehydration:

The single best strategy for preventing dehydration is to drink before you become thirsty. The body's thirst response lags behind your actual fluid requirements. The minimum intake of water while involved in outdoor activities in hot weather is 4 liters per day. As your level of activity increases, your water intake needs to increase to compensate. Using the color of your urine is a quick and easy to assess your level

Urine Color Chart*



*This color chart is not for clinical use.

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of hydration. The darker your urine, the more water you need to drink. If you realize that you have not put out any urine in at least 2 hours, you need to increase - or double - your water intake. If you wait until you experience thirst, you are not drinking enough, and are at risk for dehydration.

Sports drinks contain a high concentration of sugars and solutes that can actually make dehydration worse, so sports drinks should be avoided until your urine output is near clear. Many sports drinks also contain caffeine, which causes even further fluid loss, so any drinks containing caffeine should be avoided.