



# BetterSafe

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

## Don't Dry Out Make Sure You Drink Enough Water

You may wonder if you've been drinking enough water, especially when it's hot out. There's a lot of confusing advice out there about how much you really need. The truth is that most healthy bodies are very good at regulating water. Elderly people, young children and some special cases—like people taking certain medications—need to be a little more careful. Here's what you need to know.

"Water is involved in all body processes," says Dr. Jack M. Guralnik of NIH's National Institute on Aging. "You need the proper amount for all those processes to work correctly."

The body regulates how much water it keeps so it can maintain levels of the various minerals it needs to work properly. But every time you breathe out, sweat, urinate or have a bowel movement, you lose some fluid. When you lose fluid, your blood can become more concentrated. Healthy people compensate by releasing stores of water, mostly from muscles. And, of course, you get thirsty. That's your body's way of telling you it needs more water.

At a certain point, however, if you lose enough water, your body can't compensate. Eventually, you can become dehydrated, meaning that your body doesn't have enough fluid to work properly. "Basically, you're drying out," Guralnik says.

Any healthy person can become dehydrated on hot days, when you've been exercising hard or when you

have a disease or condition like diarrhea, in which you can lose a lot of fluid very quickly. But dehydration is generally more of a problem in the elderly, who can have a decreased sensitivity to thirst, and very young children who can't yet tell their parents when they're thirsty.

### HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?

How much water does your body need? Guralnik says you have to consider the circumstances. "If you're active on a hot day, you need more water than if you're sitting in an air-conditioned office," he explains. An average person on an average day needs about 3 quarts of water a day. But if you're out in the hot sun, you'll need a lot more than that.





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Signs of dehydration in adults are being thirsty, urinating less often than usual, having dark-colored urine, having dry skin, feeling tired or dizziness and fainting. Signs of dehydration in babies and young children include a dry mouth and tongue, crying without tears, no wet diapers for 3 hours or more, a high fever and being unusually sleepy or drowsy.

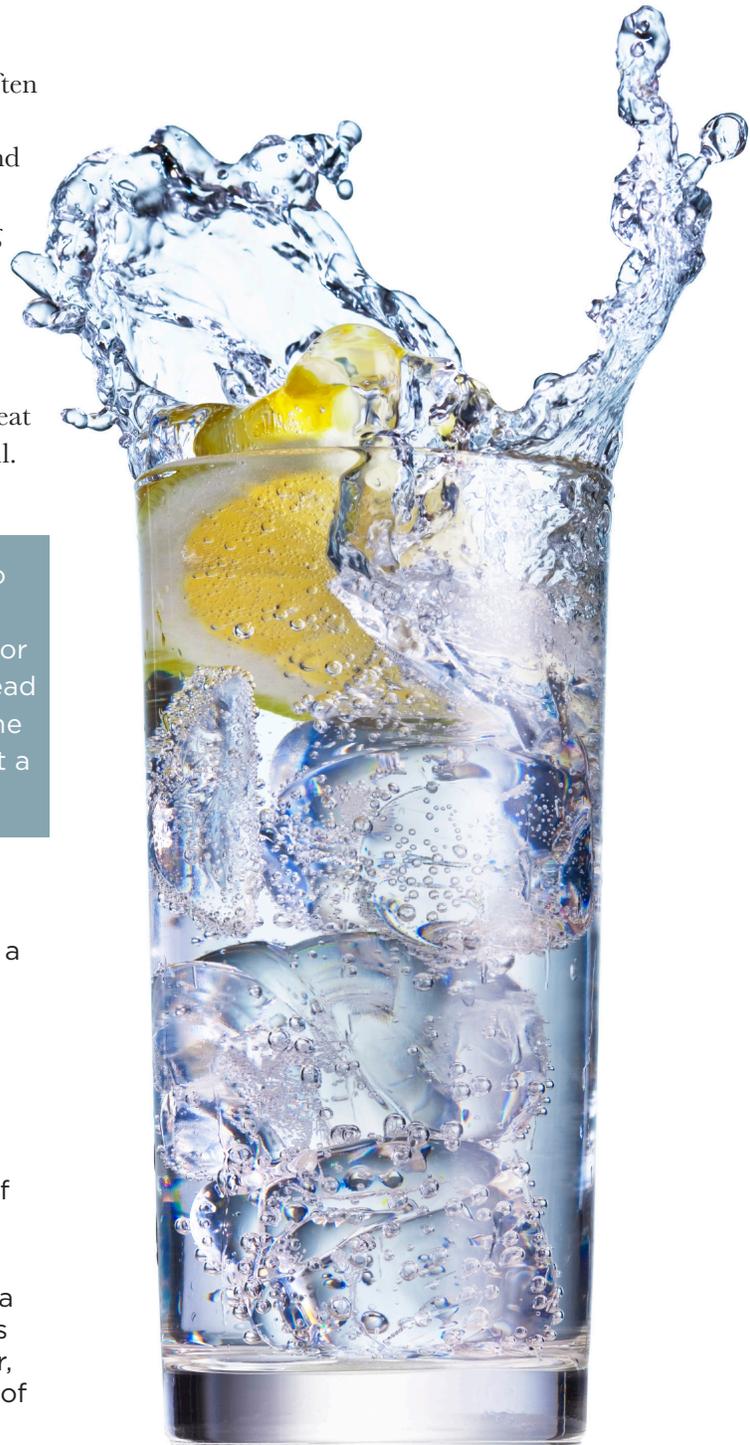
If you suspect dehydration, drink small amounts of water over a period of time. Taking too much all at once can overload your stomach and make you throw up. For people exercising in the heat and losing a lot of minerals in sweat, sports drinks can be helpful. But avoid any drinks that have caffeine.

**REMEMBER:** the best way to deal with dehydration is to prevent it. Make sure to drink enough water in situations where you might become dehydrated. For those caring for small children or older people with conditions that can lead to dehydration, Guralnik advises, "You need to prompt the person to drink fluids and remind them often. It's not just a one-time problem."

## DEHYDRATION: WHAT TO DO

If you suspect someone is suffering from dehydration or a heat-related illness:

- Get the person out of the sun and into a cool place.
- Offer fluids like water, fruit and vegetable juices.
- Urge the person to lie down and rest.
- Encourage the person to shower, bathe or sponge off with cool water.
- Watch for heat stroke, which is especially dangerous and requires emergency medical attention. Look for a body temperature above 104° and symptoms such as confusion, combativeness, faintness, bizarre behavior, staggering, strong rapid pulse, dry flushed skin, lack of sweating or unconsciousness.





# DayInDayOut

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

## Deep Vein Trouble

### Recognize & Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis

Most people have heard of “economy-class syndrome.” People who sit through long airplane flights without moving around can develop blood clots in veins deep within their lower leg or thigh. The condition is called deep vein thrombosis (DVT), and it’s not just airplane flights that can raise your risk. Anyone sitting in a car, at a desk or elsewhere for long periods of time without moving is at higher risk. And other factors you might not expect, like pregnancy, can also increase your risk for DVT.

DVT can cause serious complications if not treated. However, only about half of people with DVT have symptoms. The symptoms usually appear in only one leg. They may include a swollen area of the leg, pain or tenderness in the leg, increased warmth in the swollen or painful areas and red or discolored skin. You might only feel the leg pain when you’re standing or walking. It’s important to see a doctor right away if you have these symptoms.

Some people find out that they have DVT only after the clot has moved from the leg and traveled to the lung—a pulmonary embolism. Shortness of breath and chest pain when you take a deep breath are signs that you may have a pulmonary embolism.

#### MANY FACTORS MAY INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR DVT:

- Having an inherited blood clotting disorder.
- Having a recent injury, surgery or immobilization, which may slow blood flow in a deep vein.
- Undergoing treatment for cancer.
- Having other medical conditions, such as varicose veins.
- Sitting for a long period of time, for example, on a long trip in a car or airplane.
- Pregnancy, especially the first 6 weeks after giving birth.

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# Day In Day Out

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- Being over age 60, although deep vein thrombosis can occur in any age group.
- Being overweight.
- Taking birth control pills or hormone therapy.
- Having a medical device called a central venous catheter.

Doctors most often use a test called duplex ultrasound to diagnose deep vein clots. It uses sound waves to evaluate the flow of blood in your veins. A computer turns the sound waves into a picture. The picture is displayed on a TV screen, where your doctor can see the blood flow in your leg.

Several types of medicine may be used to treat or prevent DVT. The most common are anticoagulants, also known as blood thinners, which decrease your blood's ability to clot. Anticoagulant treatment for DVT usually lasts from 3 to 6 months.

If you're at risk for DVT or suspect you may have it, discuss it with your doctor.

## PREVENTING DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS

If you're at risk for developing a deep vein clot, you may be able to prevent one by:

- Exercising your lower leg muscles if you will be sitting still for long periods of time.
- Getting out of bed and moving around as soon as you are able to after a long period of being bedridden. The sooner you get active, the lower your chance of developing a clot.
- Taking the medicines prescribed by your doctor to prevent or treat blood clots.
- Following up with your doctor for medicine changes and blood tests.





# TakeCharge

WELCOA'S ONLINE SELF-CARE BULLETIN

## KEEP YOUR VISION HEALTHY

LEARN ABOUT COMPREHENSIVE DILATED EYE EXAMS

People of all ages should have their eyesight tested to keep their vision at its best. Children usually have vision screening in school or at their pediatrician's office. Adults, however, may require more than vision screening.

Even if your vision seems fine, the only way to know for sure that your eyes are healthy is to get a comprehensive dilated eye exam. When you should start getting such exams depends on many factors, including your age, race, and overall health.

Growing older puts you at risk for glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and diabetic

retinopathy—the most common cause of vision loss from diabetes. These eye diseases tend to arise without any warning at their earliest stages. By the time you notice vision loss, it usually can't be reversed. Timely treatment may let you keep more of your vision longer.

"Yearly comprehensive dilated eye exams starting at age 60 are the most effective and thorough way to detect eye diseases while we can still minimize vision loss," says Dr. Paul A. Sieving, director of NIH's National Eye Institute.

If you have diabetes, high blood pressure, or a family history of

eye disease, you may need yearly comprehensive dilated eye exams earlier. African Americans have a higher risk and an earlier average onset of glaucoma compared to whites, and so are advised to have comprehensive dilated eye exams every 1 to 2 years starting at age 40.

A visual field test gauges the scope of what you're able to see. Looking straight ahead and with alternating eyes covered, you'll respond each time you see a light or the examiner's hand held at the periphery of your vision. A screen or apparatus might also be used. Loss of peripheral vision may be a sign of glaucoma, which damages the optic

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nerve responsible for carrying visual messages from the eye to the brain.

A visual acuity test detects how well you see at various distances. Looking at an eye chart about 20 feet away, you'll read aloud the smallest letters you see, first with one eye covered, then the other. The results can help assess disease progression or response to treatment, and may reveal a need for low-vision aids.

Next, the eyes are dilated by placing drops in each eye to widen the pupil, which allows more light to enter the eye. A magnifying lens is used to examine the tissues at the back of the eye, including the retina (light-sensitive tissue), the macula (the central region of the retina required for straight-ahead vision), and the optic nerve. Damage to these areas may be a sign of diabetic retinopathy,

glaucoma, or age-related macular degeneration.

Tonometry measures the eye's interior pressure by sending a quick puff of air onto its surface. High intraocular pressure is a risk factor for the optic nerve damage associated with glaucoma.

And that's it. You're good to go.

## HEALTHY EYES AT ALL AGES

- **Know your family's eye health history.** Learn if any eye conditions affect your family members.
- **Eat right.** Fruits and vegetables (especially dark leafy greens like spinach or kale) and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (like salmon or tuna) may help your eyes.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** Excess weight raises your risk for diabetes and other conditions that can harm vision.
- **Wear protective eyewear.** Wear eye protection specially designed for sports, home improvement projects, and other activities.
- **Wear sunglasses.** To protect your eyes from sun damage, choose glasses that block at least 99% of both UV-A and UV-B rays.
- **Quit smoking or never start.** Smoking is linked to an increased risk for several eye diseases.
- **Clean your hands and your contact lenses.** Avoid infection by washing your hands thoroughly before putting in or taking out contact lenses. Disinfect and replace lenses as instructed.



# To Your Health

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

## OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR MOVING AROUND

### GET ACTIVE, WHEREVER YOU ARE

You know that physical activity can help you live a longer, healthier life. But did you know you don't need to join a gym or use costly equipment to be physically active? No matter where you live, work, or go to school, you can find ways to move more and sit less throughout your day. In addition to helping your health, you might have fun without spending a lot of money.

Moving more and sitting less can reduce your risk for many serious conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer. Some studies suggest that physical activity can have mental benefits as well, helping to relieve depression and maintain thinking abilities as you age. Healthful physical activity includes exercise as well as many everyday activities, such as doing active chores around the house, yard work, or walking the dog.

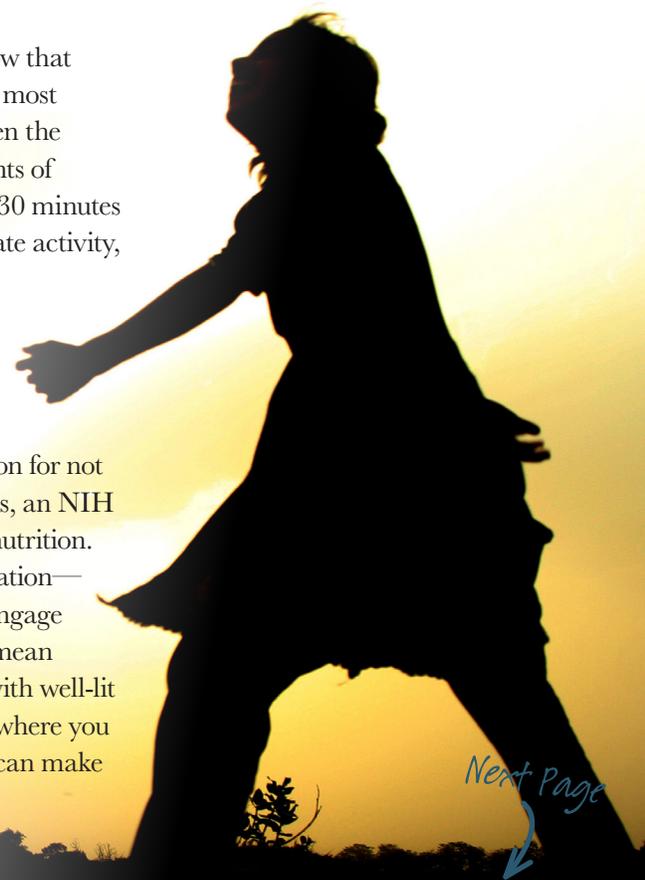
Activities that cause you to breathe harder are called aerobic activities. These make your heart and blood vessels healthier. Aerobic activities include brisk

walking, dancing, swimming, and playing basketball. Strengthening activities, like push-ups and lifting weights, help make your muscles and bones stronger and can also improve your balance.

But even though many of us know that physical activity is a good thing, most adults nationwide don't meet even the minimum recommended amounts of physical activity. (That's at least 30 minutes of brisk walking or other moderate activity, 5 days a week.)

#### WHY AREN'T WE MORE ACTIVE?

"Lack of time is a common reason for not exercising," says Dr. Mary Evans, an NIH expert on physical activity and nutrition. "Another important factor is location—having safe places to walk and engage in different activities. That can mean having sidewalks, public parks with well-lit walking paths, a shopping mall where you can walk, or other features that can make activity inviting and easy to do."



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# ToYourHealth

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Some communities don't have safe playgrounds or sidewalks, so kids tend to spend their free time indoors. Sitting instead of moving makes it hard to maintain a healthy weight. Many adults sit behind the wheel driving to work and then sit most of the day at a computer, taking few breaks to stand up and move around. In suburban neighborhoods, people often have to drive rather than walk to get to grocery stores, shops, and even public transportation.

Research also shows that taking public transportation—like buses and trains—can help boost activity. In a recent Seattle-area study, researchers found that people tend to add about 15 minutes of activity to their day when they take public transportation, in part by walking to and from the mass transit site instead of taking a car from door to door.

Although your environment can affect how active you are, you can still look for new ways to use the world around you to add some movement to your day.

“If you're at work, try climbing the stairs instead of using the elevator. And get up from your chair and move around at least once an hour,” Evans says. Stand up and walk to a colleague's office instead of sending an email. Try standing instead of sitting when you're on the phone, or have “walking” meetings with co-workers instead of sitting in a conference room. And take a brisk walk on your lunch break to get some activity in.

“It's not really necessary to engage in vigorous physical activity like running to have beneficial health effects. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking most days, in at least 10-minute segments, can have a positive effect,” Evans says.

## GET ACTIVE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Start a walking group with friends, neighbors, or co-workers.
- Make the streets safer for walking by driving the speed limit and yielding to people who walk.
- Consider joining a low- or no-cost exercise group or an office sports team such as softball or kickball, and enroll kids in community sports teams or lessons.
- Participate in local planning efforts to develop walking paths, sidewalks, and bike paths.
- Work with parents and schools to encourage kids to safely walk or ride bikes to school.
- Join other parents to ask for more physical activity at school.
- Try different activities to find the ones you really enjoy, and have fun while being active!

