

## Health Notes - Dehydration

Written by Dr. Watkins, Jr., MD  
Wednesday, 07 September 2011 04:13

---



Ulysses W. Watkins, Jr., M.D.

“Health Notes” - DEHYDRATION

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Definition – Loss of water and essential body salts.

**BODY PARTS INVOLVED** - Blood; gastrointestinal tract; kidneys.

**SEX OR AGE MOST AFFECTED** - Both sexes; all ages. Dehydration is most dangerous in newborns, infants and persons over 60.

### SIGNS & SYMPTOM

No symptoms when not infected

**When infected, it causes:**

- Dry mouth
- Decreased or absent urination.
- Sunken eyes.
- Wrinkled skin.
- Confusion; coma.

## Health Notes - Dehydration

Written by Dr. Watkins, Jr., MD  
Wednesday, 07 September 2011 04:13

---

- Low blood pressure.

### CAUSES

- Persistent vomiting or diarrhea from any cause.
- Persistent high fever.
- Heavy sweating.
- Use of drugs that deplete fluids and electrolytes, such as diuretics (“water pills”).
- Overexposure to sun or heat.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Newborns and infants.
- Adults over 60.
- Recent illness with high fever.
- Diabetes mellitus.
- Chronic kidney disease.

### HOW TO PREVENT

- Obtain medical treatment for underlying causes of dehydration.
- If you are vomiting or have diarrhea, take small amounts of liquid with non-prescription electrolyte supplements every 30 to 60 minutes.
- If you use diuretics, weigh daily. Report to your doctor a weight loss of more than 3 pounds in one day or 5 pounds in a week

### WHAT TO EXPECT

### APPROPRIATE HEALTH CARE

- Self-care.
- Doctor’s treatment.

## Health Notes - Dehydration

Written by Dr. Watkins, Jr., MD  
Wednesday, 07 September 2011 04:13

---

- Hospitalization for intravenous fluids (severe or prolonged illness only).

### DIAGNOSTIC MEASURES

- Your own observation of symptoms.
- Medical history and physical exam by a doctor.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Blood pressure drop, shock and death from prolonged severe dehydration.

### PROBABLE OUTCOME

Curable with control of underlying cause and replacement of necessary fluids.

### HOW TO TREAT

#### GENERAL MEASURES

- Weigh daily on an accurate home scale and record the weight so you can be aware of fluid loss.
- If you have vomiting or diarrhea, keep a record of the number of episodes so you can estimate your fluid loss.
- For minor dehydration, take frequent small amounts of clear liquids. Large amounts may trigger vomiting.

#### MEDICATION

## **Health Notes - Dehydration**

Written by Dr. Watkins, Jr., MD  
Wednesday, 07 September 2011 04:13

---

Your doctor may prescribe intravenous fluids to replace lost water.

### **ACTIVITY**

Rest in bed until you recover. You may read or watch TV.

### **DIET**

Depends on the underlying disorder. Salty foods decrease the affect of dehydration.

### **CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF**

If you have symptoms of dehydration.