



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox
Talks

Staying Hydrated

Staying Hydrated

When the temperatures rise, getting enough to drink is important whether you're playing sports, traveling or just sitting in the sun. And it's critical for your heart health.

Keeping the body hydrated helps the heart more easily pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles. And, it helps the muscles work efficiently. In short, if you're well hydrated, your heart doesn't have to work as hard.

Dehydration can be a serious condition that can lead to problems ranging from swollen feet or a headache to life-threatening illnesses such as heat stroke.

How much water do you need?

The amount of water a person needs depends on climatic conditions, clothing worn and exercise intensity and duration. A person who perspires heavily will need to drink more than someone who doesn't. Certain medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, may also mean you need to drink more water. Some medications can act as diuretics, causing the body to lose more fluid.

Thirst isn't the best indicator that you need to drink. If you get thirsty, you're already dehydrated.

The easiest thing to do is pay attention to the color of your urine. Pale and clear means you're well hydrated. If it's dark, drink more fluids.

If you want to know exactly how much fluid you need, try weighing yourself before and after exercise, to see how much you've lost through perspiration. For every pound of sweat you lose, that's a pint of water you'll need to replenish.

Not sweating during vigorous physical activity can be a red flag that you're dehydrated to the point of developing heat exhaustion.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What if I'm not thirsty, but am going to work out?

Drinking water before exercising or going out in the sun is an important first step. Thirst isn't the best indicator that you need to drink. If you get thirsty, you're already dehydrated.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you ensure you drink enough water during the day?