Signs of Dehydration in Children

Ways to Tell if a Child is Dehydrated

Dehydration in children can happen faster and affect a child more severely than in an adult. Parents should know the signs of dehydration when their child has an illness.

Children have smaller bodies than adults and have less fluid to lose if they get sick. When a child comes down with an illness that causes vomiting and diarrhea, he is at a very high risk for dehydration. Parents should be aware of the most common symptoms of dehydration, as well as how to prevent dehydration in children from happening to begin with.

Causes of Dehydration in Children

The most common causes of dehydration in children are vomiting and diarrhea associated with certain types of viruses or infections. Rotavirus is one type of intestinal illness that affects mostly children under the age of five and can lead to severe dehydration due to watery diarrhea.

Symptoms of Dehydration in Children

Parents can tell if their child is dehydrated by looking for the following symptoms:

- Dryness of the mouth
- Little to no tear production when crying
- Sunken eyes
- Sunken soft spot on the head of an infant or a toddler
- Babies who do not have at least one wet diaper over the span of six hours
- Children who do not urinate at least once in the span of twelve hours
- Urine that is dark
- Dry skin
- Skin abnormally cool to the touch
- Crankiness
- Fatigue
- Lethargy
- Dizziness
- How to Prevent Dehydration in Children
It is important that a parent try and replace fluids a child loses due to vomiting or diarrhea. Clear liquids usually work best and are easy for a child to tolerate. If a child is beginning to show symptoms of dehydration they can be given a liquid pediatric electrolyte supplement such as Pedialyte. Sports drinks or juices may seem like a good option but they can actually make a child sicker. The high sugar content in sports drinks, juices, or sodas can cause diarrhea to become more severe, dehydrating the child more rather than rehydrating.

Ice chips are an option for children who are unable to drink without vomiting. They melt slowly so that the child is not overwhelmed with a mouthful of fluid and nausea is not triggered. Ice chips can serve the same purpose if a child has diarrhea and should not have the sugar in ice pops.

**Treatment for Dehydration**

Treatment for dehydration depends on the age of the child and the severity of dehydration. Older children will dehydrate at a slower rate than babies or toddlers. If a child is mildly dehydrated he or she can be rehydrated at home with the appropriate fluids as long as the condition does not become more severe. An infant or toddler that experiences moderate to severe dehydration may require medical intervention in the form of IV fluids.

Parents who have concerns regarding their child and dehydration should consult their child’s pediatrician. It is always better to be safe than to be sorry.

**What are the best drinks to avoid dehydration?**

Isotonic drinks are the best choice to avoid dehydration. They contain 6-8 grams of carbohydrates in every 100ml. The drinks also contain salts that help the body use the fluids efficiently.

All types of non-alcoholic drinks are the right choice to prevent dehydration.

**Water is the most popular and effective form of fluid to avoid dehydration.**

**What not to drink when playing sports?**

Drinks like cola, lemonade and high-energy drinks should be avoided during sports. These are not of any help to the body as it takes lot of time for the body to absorb and use them.

You can take tea and coffee, but only in small amounts. However, avoid excess consumption of these drinks as they contain a lot of caffeine.