

Dehydration

Dehydration is caused by the excessive loss of water and salts from the body due to illness or from prolonged exposure to heat. The Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio reminds older adults that severe dehydration can easily become a life-threatening condition for them. Certain medications can cause the body to lose water, and, if not replenished, can accelerate the onset of dehydration

Causes:

- Severe sweating
- Extreme heat
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Preventing Dehydration:

- Avoid coffee or alcoholic beverages, they can increase dehydration
- Don't wait until thirsty, drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, especially water
- Avoid being outside during the intense sunlight hours from 10 am to 3 pm

What to look for:

- Thirst
- Dry skin
- Fatigue
- Light-headedness
- Confusion
- Dry mouth (and mucous membranes)
- Increased heart rate
- Increased breathing rate
- Less frequent urination

Treatment:

- Move to a cool and dry place
- Lie down and rest
- Apply cool water to the skin, reapply often
- Drink fluids such as water, juice, or sports drinks (like Gatorade)