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| P:\EHSPHL\PHL\EPI\COMMON\03_Notifiable Conditions\foodborne\ORCA Student Projects\Norovirus Toolkit\WA DoH Norovirus Toolkit Materials\DoH Logo.png  DOH 421-179 | Dehydration When Sick:  Prevention and Recognition |

**Symptoms**

**Mild to moderate dehydration:**

* Dry, sticky mouth
* Sleepiness or tiredness
* Thirst
* Decreased urine output
* No wet diapers for 3 hours for infants
* Few or no tears when crying
* Dry skin
* Headache
* Constipation
* Dizziness or lightheadedness

**Severe dehydration:**

* Extreme thirst
* Extreme fussiness or sleepiness in infants and children; irritability and confusion in adults
* Very dry mouth, skin, and mucous membranes
* Little or no urination – any urination produced will be darker than normal
* Sunken eyes
* Shriveled and dry skin that doesn’t bounce back when pinched in a fold
* Rapid breathing and heartbeat
* Fever
* Delirium or unconsciousness

*Information courtesy of the Mayo Clinic.*

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**What is dehydration?**

When your body loses substantially more fluids than you are drinking, you become dehydrated. Your body doesn’t have enough fluids and electrolytes to carry out normal functions.

**How does your body lose fluids?**

* Significant vomiting or diarrhea
* Urinating
* Sweating
* Fever

**How can you prevent dehydration when you are sick?**

* Start drinking small amounts of extra water or an oral rehydration solution at the first signs of illness; don’t wait until you are thirsty. If you have vomiting or diarrhea, drink ¼ cup of fluid every 15 minutes.
* If you don’t have an appetite, try to eat small amounts of foods and fluids 5-7 times per day.

**How can you treat dehydration when someone is sick?**

* **Children:**

Give an oral rehydration solution to infants and children who have diarrhea, vomiting, or fever, unless your doctor advises otherwise. Give liquids slowly until your child’s urine becomes clear in color. When your child is vomiting, try giving small amounts at frequent intervals (e.g., a spoonful every few minutes). If your child can’t keep this down, wait 30-60 minutes and try again.

* **Babies:**

Continue to breast-feed your baby, and offer your baby an oral rehydration solution in a bottle as well. If you give your baby formula, try switching to one that is lactose free until diarrhea improves.

* **Adults:**

Drink more water or other liquids. Avoid fruit juices, carbonated beverages, and coffee, as these can make diarrhea worse.

* **Severe dehydration:**

Children and adults with severe dehydration should be treated in the hospital with intravenous (IV) fluids.