



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

- Beat the Heat: Stay Hydrated -

SANTA BARBARA, Ca. July 18, 2011 –We all make plans to enjoy the outdoors in summer. But did you make plans for ensuring that you are well-hydrated?

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department reminds people that dehydration can take place quickly and can be dangerous, even fatal. It occurs when too much water is lost from the body, not enough is taken in, or both.

Many summer activities involve outdoor exertion, and it is important to remember that sweating can lead to rapid depletion of water. Just taking an energetic walk in hot weather can cause as much as 16 ounces of fluid to leave the body. More significant exertion or sports — beach volleyball, biking, hiking, swimming — can lead to much greater water loss.

Signs of dehydration can include a dry mouth, lack of tears, less sweating, muscle cramps, palpitations, dark yellow urine, lightheadedness, and nausea and vomiting. Confusion, weakness and even loss of consciousness can occur when dehydration is severe.

For mild to moderate dehydration, oral fluid replacement in small, frequent amounts is recommended. Clear-fluid options include water, clear broth, ice pops and sports drinks containing electrolyte replacement fluids. The average adult needs 2 to 3 liters of fluids a day; if dehydrated, more may be needed. For severe symptoms, including confusion, lethargy or coma, it is advisable to go to the emergency room or call 911.

Better yet, try to prevent dehydration by keeping in mind the following:

- * Strenuous activities should not be scheduled during the hottest times of the day, generally between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- * Head into shaded areas as frequently as possible.
- * Wear hats and light, thin clothes to block some of the heat.
- * Hydrate often. A simple rule for hydration in the heat is one glass of water before, one during and one after any moderate exertion lasting an hour.
- * The young and the elderly are most at risk for dehydration.
- * Avoid beverages that contain caffeine (coffee and soda) as they can be dehydrating.
- * Carry a bottle of water with you at all times.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department reminds people don't wait until you feel thirsty to drink, as you may already be dehydrated. If you keep these tips in mind, you should have no trouble staying hydrated. Have a great summer and keep cool!

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