



# Water, Water, Everywhere... And Plenty You Should Drink!

As the summer months start turning up the heat, the chances of suffering from dehydration also goes up.

So let's break down exactly what's involved with dehydration, how to avoid it, and how to recover from it if it happens...



**Dehydration is the loss of water and electrolytes.** The two main factors that can increase your chance of dehydration are as follows:

- **High humidity.** When the humidity is high, sweat won't evaporate as quickly, which keeps your body from releasing heat as fast as it may need to.
- **Personal factors.** Age, obesity, fever, dehydration, heart disease, mental illness, poor circulation, sunburn, and prescription drug use can play a role in whether a person can cool off enough in very hot weather.

### How should you avoid dehydration?

- Stay in air-conditioned buildings as much as possible. Contact your local health department or locate an air-conditioned shelter in your area. Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death. If a home is not air-conditioned, people can reduce their risk for heat-related illness by spending time in public facilities that are air-conditioned, and using air conditioning in vehicles.
- Do not rely on a fan as your primary cooling device during an extreme heat event.
- Drink more water than usual and **don't wait** until you're thirsty to drink.
- Check on a friend or neighbor and have someone do the same for you.
- Don't use the stove or oven to cook—it will make you and your house hotter.

### What are the warning signs?

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103°F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness

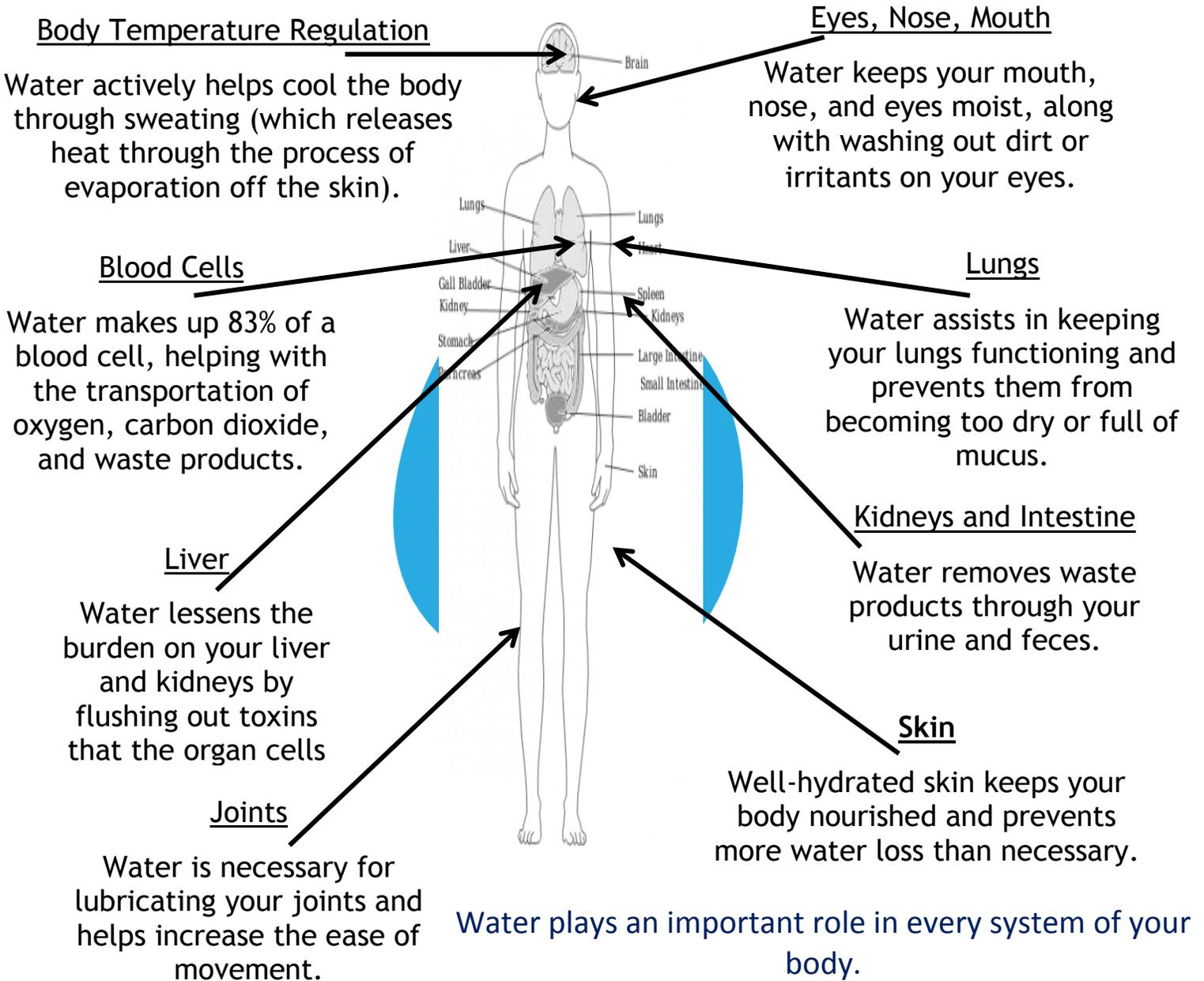


### How should you treat it?

- Get yourself to a shady area.
- Cool yourself rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, get yourself in a cool shower; spray yourself with cool water from a garden hose; sponge yourself with cool water; or if the humidity is low, wrap yourself in a cool, wet sheet and sit in front of a fan.
- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101-102°F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.



# So the Big Question is: “Why Water??”



Water plays an important role in every system of your body.

Your body also needs water to keep every system functioning smoothly!

Go to the Video Page @ [www.newvtc.org](http://www.newvtc.org) and click “The Single Best Thing You Can Drink” to learn more!!

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/extremeheat/>

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/faq.asp>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/nutrition/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/water/art-20044256>

<http://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/water-the-forgotten-nutrient>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/multimedia/functions-of-water-in-the-body/img-20005799>

<http://www.nestle-waters.com/healthy-hydration/water-fonctions-in-human-body>

Source: Montain et al. (1999). Mil Med 164 : 502-508

Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Feel free to talk with me! And have a wonderful holiday weekend!

- Ann Keidatz, R.N. B.S.N.

