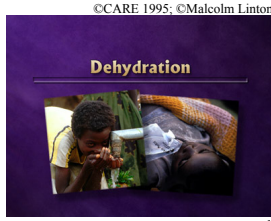
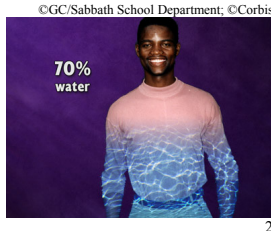


Dehydration



If someone offered you a medicine that could cure or prevent many sicknesses, would you be interested? For most of us, drinking plenty of water would be better than a medicine.



Did you know that your body is nearly 70% water?¹ We can live only a few days without it. Today we want to talk about—the importance of keeping plenty of water in our bodies.

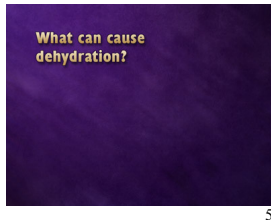


We lose water every day in our sweat, urine, stools, and even from breathing.

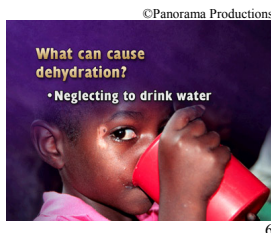
Because of this we need to drink water to make up for what we lose. If we don't do this we will become **dehydrated**, which means that our bodies will be too dry, with too little water.



Dehydration can be very dangerous, especially in **children**. It kills many people every day.



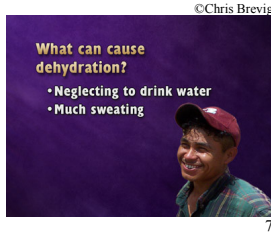
What can cause dehydration?



- Neglecting to drink water
-

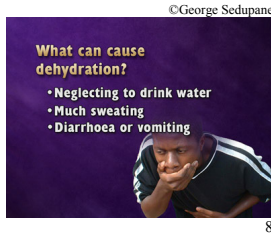
Probably the most common cause is simply that we don't drink enough water. By the time you are thirsty, your body already has too little water.

Dehydration



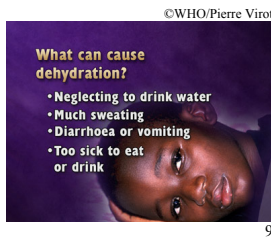
- Much sweating

It is normal to sweat, especially in hot climates. But the water lost must be replaced.



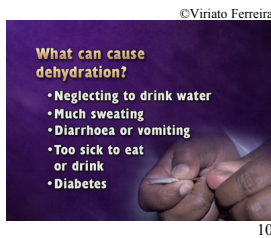
- Diarrhoea or vomiting

Having many loose stools or much vomiting, removes a lot of fluid or water from the body. That water must be added back by drinking.



- Too sick to eat or drink

Sometimes when we are sick we don't feel like drinking anything. But we should not depend upon feelings; drinking water, even if we can only take little sips, is important to our healing.



- Diabetes

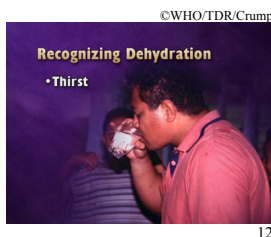
People who have diabetes often pass a lot of urine. This can make them dehydrated more easily.

If we want to be healthy and not have our body become dry, we need to drink plenty of water.



How can we know if a person is dehydrated?

These are the main signs:^{2 3}

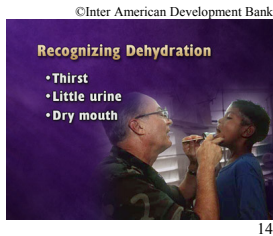


- Thirst

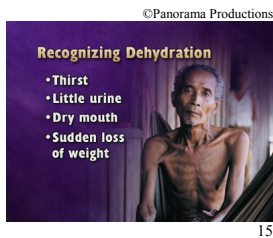
Dehydration



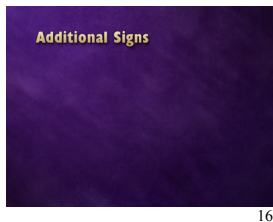
- Little or no urine (dark yellow)



- Dry mouth (and)



- Sudden loss of weight



As the sick person continues to lose more liquid and does not drink enough water there are additional signs:



- Eyes become sunken and dry



- Person becomes sleepy or drowsy

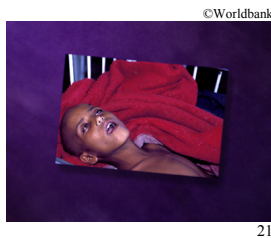
Dehydration



- Skin goes back slowly when pinched (especially on children)



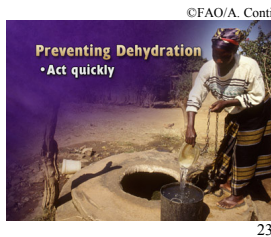
- (and in babies the) Soft spot (on top of the head) goes inwards



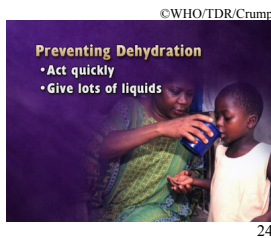
When one is vomiting or has diarrhoea, dehydration can become quite serious.



Dehydration can quickly lead to **death**, especially in small children. For this reason we must do all we can to prevent it.



Act quickly!

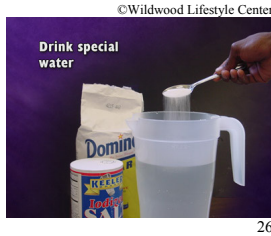


Give lots of liquids to drink

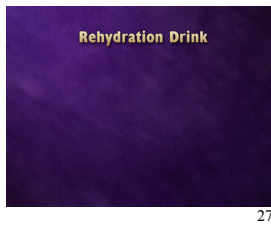
Dehydration



- Continue breastfeeding (if your baby has Diarrhoea or vomiting)



Watery stools aren't just water. They have some sugar and salts mixed with them. Because of this, when a person has Diarrhoea, the best drink is water with a little bit of sugar and salt mixed in. This is called a "Rehydration Drink" The water, sugar and salt all help to bring the body back into balance.



It is very easy to make a Rehydration Drink at home.



Mix together:

- One liter of clean water



- Half a level teaspoon of salt and



- 8 level teaspoons of sugar or molasses

Dehydration



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If you can, add half a cup of coconut water, orange juice or mashed ripe banana to each liter.⁴ These all have a lot of potassium, one of the salts lost in vomiting and diarrhoea.



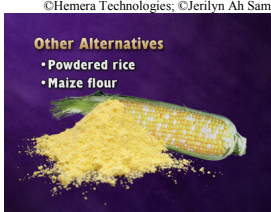
32

This drink can be made differently depending on what is available.⁵ You can use any of the following cereals instead of the sugar:



33

- Powdered rice



34

- Maize flour (mealie meal-finely ground)



35

- Wheat flour



36

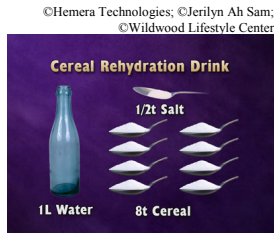
- Sorghum flour (or)

Dehydration



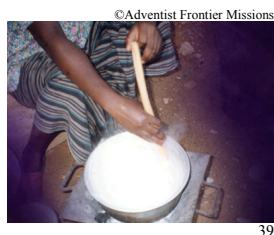
37

- Cooked and mashed potatoes



38

If you use a cereal, each of the eight spoons must be heaped; and remember to add half a teaspoon of salt.



After mixing everything, the drink must be boiled for 5-7 minutes to form a soup or watery porridge. Cool it before drinking.



40

The prepared drink should be kept in a cool place and covered to protect it from flies and dust.



41

Use the fluid on the day it is prepared. Throw away any leftover drink from the day before.



42

“Rehydration drink” packets may also be available at your clinic. You should use it as soon as someone has watery diarrhoea.

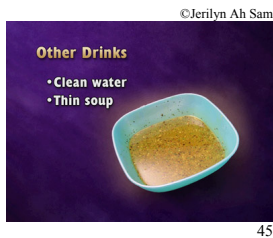
Dehydration



If you can't make "Rehydration Drink," and your clinic does not have the packets, drink:



Clean water



Thin soup (or)



Weak teas (make sure it is not a tea for constipation)



Sweet drinks like Coca-Cola, Seven-Up and Fanta are **not** the best because they have too much sugar.



If you have diarrhoea, how much should you drink to prevent dehydration?

Give as much as the person can take.

Dehydration



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A large person needs three or more liters a day.



50

A small child usually needs at least one liter a day, or one glass for each watery stool.⁶



51

If vomiting, take little amounts every 5-10 minutes day and night. Large amounts may make vomiting worse. For children give 2-3 small spoonfuls from a cup, wait five minutes, then give some more. Even if the person vomits don't stop giving the drink.



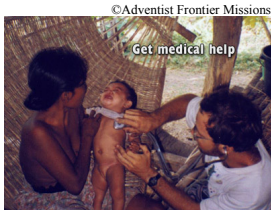
52

Many people think that all foods should be avoided during diarrhoea, because foods will make the diarrhoea worse. This is wrong. The body needs food to replace what is lost.⁷ Foods such as bananas, apples, potatoes, and cooked rice or maize can be safely given.



53

If a child with diarrhoea is breastfeeding, continue. Breast milk is safe, clean, and nourishing. Drinks of rehydration liquid should be given between breastfeeding.⁸



54

If dehydration gets worse at any time, even with treatment, **go for medical help.**

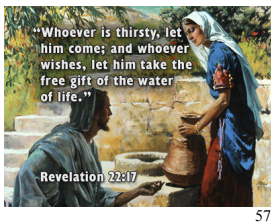
Dehydration



As we can see, water is vital to prevent the dangers of dehydration. Train yourself and your family to enjoy drinking lots of water when they are well and also when they are sick.



The Bible uses water to teach both physical and spiritual lessons. To those who are thirsting to know God and experience true happiness, Jesus offers to freely give the water of life.



He says, “Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.” Revelation 22:17 (NIV)

As you receive the Spiritual water of life, may you also enjoy all the physical benefits from drinking plenty of good water.

¹ Aileen Ludington, MD, Hans Diehl, DrHSc, MPH, Health Power, Review and Herald Pub. Assoc. 2000, p. 191.

² Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p.151

³ Heese, H. *Handbook of Pediatrics*, Oxford Southern Africa, 1997 p.220-223

⁴ Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p.152

⁵ Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p.152

⁶ Werner, D. *Where There Is No doctor*, The Hesperian Foundation, 1999 p.152

⁷ Guidelines for Training Community Health Workers in Nutrition, 2nd ed., WHO, 1990, p. 104

⁸ Guidelines for Training Community Health Workers in Nutrition, 2nd ed., WHO, 1990, p. 104