The United States Military has a supplier whose slogan says it best:

"Hydrate or Die".

Without intervention and resolution of the problem, muscle cramps (caused by loss of salt from heavy sweating) can lead to heat exhaustion (caused by dehydration), which can lead to heatstroke (which can cause shock, brain damage, and DEATH..."Hydrate or Die")

Solutions:

1. **Drink 12-20 oz, 1-2 hours before exercise.** Sports drinks and water are the best choices. Didn't plan ahead? 15-30 minutes before exercise, drink at least 10-14 oz of fluid.

2. **DO NOT drink liquids that contain Caffeine or more than 15g of sugar per serving.** They will interfere with the body's ability to control its internal temperature.

3. Avoid overheating if you are taking medication that impairs heat regulation (Blood flow) or if you are over weight, elderly, or unfit.

4. **The quickest way to get liquids metabolized into your system is to drink the liquid at room temperature.** Drinking ice-cold liquids causes the stomach to constrict and impedes the distribution of vitamins, nutrients, and electrolytes that the drink provides.

Facts about drinking water:

- **Lack of water is the #1 trigger of daytime fatigue.**
- **A 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing on computer screen or paperwork.**
- **90 – 125 oz. of liquid a day significantly eases back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers.** The liquid can, also, be accumulated by eating foods high in water content.
- **Drinking five 8 oz. glasses of water daily decreases the risk of colon cancer by 45%, plus it can slash the risk of breast cancer by 79%, and one is 50% less likely to develop bladder cancer.**
- **One 8 oz. glass of water at midnight relieves hunger pangs for almost 100% of dieters.**

**Warning signs of Heat Stroke** vary but may include:

- an extremely high body temperature (above 103°F, orally)
- red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- rapid, strong pulse
- throbbing headache
- dizziness, nausea
- disorientation, confusion
- unconsciousness

If you see any of these signs, you may be dealing with a LIFE-THREATENING emergency.

**Call 911.**
SKIN TURGOR (elasticity)

A quick check of skin turgor by pinching the skin over the back of the hand, on the abdomen, or over the front of the chest under the collarbone is a good way to check for dehydration at home.

Mild dehydration will cause the skin to be slightly slow in its return to normal.

To rehydrate, drink more fluids -- particularly water.

If turgor is severe, indicating moderate or severe dehydration, see your health care provider immediately.

Heat Index Guidance

The National Weather Service uses a "heat index" that alerts the public when combinations of heat and humidity could make hot weather hazardous. It tells how hot the Heat-Humidity combination makes it feel.

This urine color chart is a simple tool you can use to assess if you are drinking enough fluids throughout day to stay hydrated.

If your urine matches the colors numbered 1, 2, or 3 you are hydrated.

If your urine matches the colors numbered 4 through 8 you are dehydrated and need to drink for more fluid.

* Indicates a Major sign

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