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## Health and Hydration

**Dr. Kristopher R. Grimes**, Associate Professor and State Extension Specialist  
for Nutrition and Nutrition Education

As summer arrives and we're at the beach, doing yard work, gardening, or a host of other outdoor activities, proper hydration tends to be in the forefront of our minds. However, dehydration can be a problem throughout the year. With our busy schedules, sometimes we forget the simplest of tasks, including drinking enough water.

It's recommended that everyone drinks at least 64 ounces, or eight 8-ounce glasses, of water throughout the day in order to stay properly hydrated. That may seem like a lot, but as we sweat and urinate, we can lose a lot of water. Illness or prolonged exercise can cause us to lose more water than we realize and, sometimes, dehydration is hard to spot. Symptoms can include:

- Dry mouth
- Excessive thirst
- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Mild to severe headaches
- Dizziness

Prolonged dehydration can lead to even more severe health problems and also death. Because of this, we need to be aware of the symptoms. Below are some helpful tips to remain healthy and hydrated.

- **Wake-up to water:** When you wake up in the morning, drink at least one glass of water before you eat. This will help replenish any perspiration that was lost while sleeping.
- **Drink before you snack:** Dehydration can often be masked as hunger. When you are hungry for a snack, drink a glass of water first to see if that satiates your craving. This will also help you take in fewer calories.
- **Drink during exercise or physical activity:** dehydration during exercise, or other physical activities, can affect our health and our performance. Instead of saving your hydration till the activity is over, drink a portion over the entire time.
- **Drink after you exercise:** You can easily lose 1-2 pounds during an intense physical activity. Unfortunately, this is not fat loss, but water loss. Make sure to replenish your body with water after your activity is over.



- **Keep a reusable water bottle nearby:** If you want to stay regularly hydrated, keep a water bottle filled, and nearby, at all times. This will prevent you from getting dehydrated or choosing less healthy options like soda or sugar-filled teas and juices.
- **Utilize backpack bladders:** if you are hiking, kayaking, fishing, or participating in some other physical activity that requires the use of your hands, it's useful to have a bladder filled with water that fits inside a backpack. This also allows you not to have to stop your activity to take a drink.
- **Remember water quality:** when hiking, fishing, camping, or participating in other outdoor activities, if you run out of drinking water, you may choose to drink from a lake, pond, or stream. Be careful! Those sources of water can have parasites or bacteria from wildlife. To be safe, keep a filter, or a water bottle that has a filter, handy that will strain out the majority of organisms that can harm you.
- **Choose water, not sugar:** Often when we are thirsty, we'll drink soda, juice, sports drinks, tea, or other liquids. While those items can hydrate you, they are not as healthy as water for your system and can add unwanted calories. In addition, some of these drinks can increase urination and dehydration.

Dehydration does not have to be a problem. Know the symptoms and stay prepared in order to stay healthy and hydrated throughout the year!