

Children Need More Water When Playing in the Heat

With summer approaching, it is important to remember that children become dehydrated very quickly when playing in the heat.

Children don't tolerate heat as well as adults because their bodies generate more heat relative to their size than adults do. They are also not as quick to adjust to changes in temperatures that summer brings. Children also have more skin surface relative to their body size which means they lose more water through evaporation from the skin.

Kids tend to forget to drink when they are playing and need to be reminded. Muscle work of any kind causes the body to lose water through sweat. This is true even when swimming or playing in other cool environments.

Dehydration is a serious condition, especially in small children. Watch for signs such as decreased frequency of urination, dark urine, and coated tongue. More severe dehydration includes sunken eyes, nausea, muscle cramps and pain, clammy skin and a throbbing heart. If the child has any of these symptoms, seek advice from a physician immediately.

Advice for kids in active play, especially in the heat include drink a couple of glasses of cold water 1-2 hours before the activity and another cup 10-15 minutes before. Take water breaks every 15 minutes during activity to drink at least 1/2 cup of water. Plain cold water is absorbed most quickly by the body.