

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING A GOOD HYDRATION STATUS

DEHYDRATION SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES THE RISK OF WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND THE ONSET OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES. PROLONGED DEHYDRATION CAN LEAD TO CHRONIC HEALTH ISSUES, INCLUDING KIDNEY DISEASES AND ADVERSELY AFFECTS WORK PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY. ENSURING ADEQUATE HYDRATION IS CRUCIAL FOR MAINTAINING SAFETY, HEALTH, AND EFFICIENCY IN WORK ENVIRONMENTS.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE DEHYDRATION

Workers can evaluate their hydration status by checking the quantity and color of the urine emitted: you are in a good state of hydration if you feel the urge to urinate once every 2 or 3 hours and if the urine is light in color (see following figure).



FACTORS THAT PROMOTE DEHYDRATION AND HEAT ILLNESSES

- Presence of diseases such as chronic bronchitis, heart disease, diabetes, gastroenteritis
- Use of drugs for the treatment of chronic diseases and e.g., diuretics, antidepressants, anticoagulants
- Inadequate supply
- Insufficient acclimatization period
- Heavy, non-breathable clothing (e.g., personal protective equipment, uniforms or work overalls)
- High level of work intensity

HOW TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION



AT HOME

- Remember that the body must gradually adjust to the heat; a 7–14 day acclimatization period with a gradual increase in the amount of time exposed to the heat is suitable.
- Drink plenty of fresh juices and cut back on coffee to rehydrate yourself before your work shift. Maintain a healthy diet by eating a balanced meal and abstaining from alcohol.

STARTING YOUR DAY HYDRATED IS CRUCIAL

With research indicating that around 80% of workers are already dehydrated upon arriving at work, pre-hydration can significantly ease maintaining hydration levels throughout the day..

- **The sooner you begin hydrating, the less stress your body experiences.**

If you start working in dehydrated conditions, the water drunk during the day, even if consumed in adequate quantities, may not be sufficient to satisfy the body's water needs.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REHYDRATE EVEN AT THE END OF THE WORKING DAY

- Since meals often restore the mineral salts lost through perspiration, eating at regular intervals is crucial to maintaining the hydro-electrolyte balance.
- **Employees who observe Ramadan** and self-restrict their water intake for religious reasons are required to consume a minimum of two litres of water after nightfall and two litres before to sunrise. Since hydration builds up over time, this measurement is essential. Additionally, it's crucial to refrain from skipping breakfast before the fast begins.
- Energy drinks should be avoided: some contain much more caffeine than the classic cup of coffee; caffeine in such quantities can negatively affect hydration status. Additionally, many energy drinks contain high amounts of sugar and add unnecessary calories to your diet.
- **Avoid consuming alcoholic beverages with meals because alcohol promotes vasodilation and increases the risk of heat-related illnesses.**



AT WORK IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTINUE DRINKING DURING THE DAY AND BEFORE YOU FEEL THIRST

Those who work in conditions of exposure to heat, especially when intense and persistent, should drink 1 glass (250 ml) of water every 15-20 minutes, or approximately 1 liter per hour.

Drinking a glass of water every 15-20 minutes is more efficient than drinking larger quantities more infrequently.

Water dispensers should be installed at different locations in the workplace.

In case of heavy sweating, reintroduce lost mineral salts together with liquids with a diet rich in fruit and vegetables and, in case of intense physical effort, with supplements, on the advice of the competent doctor.

FOR THE EMPLOYER

- Water dispensers should be installed at different locations in the workplace.
- For outdoor activities, workers can use backpacks or hydration belts equipped with a specific storage system and constant access to water.
- Alternatively, coolers containing water or large jugs of water can be installed in shaded locations in frequented areas by workers during the day.

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