

Dehydration and Electrolyte Imbalance

Why is Hydration Important?

Water and electrolytes (sodium, potassium, magnesium, calcium) help regulate **muscle function, nerve signals, and blood pressure**. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances can lead to **fatigue, muscle cramps, dizziness, confusion, and even serious complications like heat stroke or heart issues**.

Signs & Symptoms of Dehydration

Mild to Moderate Dehydration:

- ✓ Dry mouth, thirst
- ✓ Dark yellow urine or decreased urination
- ✓ Fatigue, headache
- ✓ Dizziness or lightheadedness
- ✓ Muscle cramps

Severe Dehydration (Seek Immediate Medical Attention):

Extreme thirst, dry skin
Confusion or irritability
Rapid heartbeat or breathing
No urination for 8+ hours
Fainting or low blood pressure

Signs & Symptoms of Electrolyte Imbalance

- **Low Sodium (Hyponatremia):** Confusion, nausea, muscle weakness, seizures
- **Low Potassium (Hypokalemia):** Muscle cramps, irregular heartbeat, fatigue
- **Low Magnesium (Hypomagnesemia):** Tremors, weakness, irregular heartbeat
- **Low Calcium (Hypocalcemia):** Numbness/tingling, muscle spasms

How to Prevent Dehydration & Electrolyte Imbalance

- ✓ **Drink at least 8-10 glasses of water daily** (more if sweating, exercising, or sick).
- ✓ **Replace lost electrolytes** through **foods, sports drinks, or supplements** if needed.
- ✓ **Avoid excessive caffeine, alcohol, and high-sugar drinks**, which can dehydrate you.
- ✓ **Eat a balanced diet rich in electrolyte-containing foods** (see below).

Best Sources of Electrolytes

Electrolyte	Food Sources
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Sodium	Pickles, salted nuts, broth, pretzels
Potassium	Bananas, oranges, potatoes, spinach
Magnesium	Nuts, seeds, dark chocolate, whole grains
Calcium	Dairy, leafy greens, almonds, fortified orange juice

Hydration Tips for Different Situations

Exercise & Sports - Drink **water before, during, and after workouts**; use electrolyte drinks if sweating heavily.

Hot Weather - Increase water intake; wear loose, breathable clothing.

Illness (Vomiting/Diarrhea) - Drink small sips of **oral rehydration solutions (Pedialyte, Gatorade, broth)**.

Caffeine & Alcohol - Balance each cup of coffee or alcohol with a glass of water.

When to Seek Medical Help

Severe dehydration signs (dizziness, confusion, fainting)

Persistent vomiting or diarrhea for **more than 24 hours**

Muscle spasms, irregular heartbeat, or extreme weakness

Inability to keep fluids down

Bottom Line

- ✓ **Drink water consistently throughout the day**
- ✓ **Balance electrolytes through diet or supplements if needed**
- ✓ **Avoid dehydration triggers like excess alcohol, caffeine, or extreme heat**
- ✓ **Act quickly if you experience severe symptoms**

Click here for more orthopedic patient information.

Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.