Summer hydration tips to help stay active in the heat



CAMP HILL, Pa. (July 17, 2025) — While warmer temperatures and more sunshine make summer an ideal time to be outdoors, they can also increase the risk of dehydration and heat-related illnesses. United Concordia Dental is sharing tips to help quench thirst and stay active in the heat.

In its 2024 global climate report, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Centers for Environmental Information found that 2024 was the warmest year on record since its first worldwide recording in 1850. It also reported the 10 warmest years occurring in the last decade.

“Being active in extremely high temperatures can put your oral and overall health at risk of experiencing heat-related stress, including dry mouth, heat sores, muscle cramps, dizziness and heat exhaustion/stroke, which begins when the body can no longer cool itself through sweating,” said Anthony Warren, DDS, dental director, United Concordia Dental. “Drinking plenty of fluids and eating more water-based foods like celery and spinach ensures your body can replenish any fluids lost and help avoid overheating.”

Research suggests that even a 2% decrease in body weight from water loss can cause mild dehydration, impacting saliva production, skin, mood, brain function, energy levels and digestion. Here are some tips to help you stay hydrated and beat the heat:

- **Drink before thirst hits**. When your body craves fluids, you’re likely already dehydrated. Drinking water at regular intervals is the best hydration method for your oral and overall health. It helps clean the mouth and maintain teeth and gum health, while quenching thirst. Other notable mouth-healthy mentions: coconut water, sugar-free sports drinks with electrolytes, milk and unsweetened herbal teas.
- **Avoid beverages with alcohol, caffeine or sugar**. These ingredients contribute to fluid loss in the body. Additionally, high amounts of sugar, like that found in sodas and juices, fuel cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth, as well as lead to acids developing that damage the outer layer of the teeth.
- **Eat hydrating foods**. About 20% of our daily water intake comes from food. Water-rich snacks, like cucumbers, grapes, tomatoes, watermelon and bell peppers, can keep you hydrated. They’re also rich in vitamins and minerals that can help maintain healthy teeth and gums.
- **Monitor your progress**. The easiest way to track your hydration level is through the color of your urine. Light-yellow indicates adequate hydration, whereas dark yellow to orange means you may need more fluids. Your mouth can show signs of dehydration as well, including dry mouth, thick or stringy saliva, sore throat, cracked lips, difficulty swallowing and bad breath.

“If you start to feel dehydrated, dizzy or overheated, it’s best to find some shade or head indoors; slowly sip fluids; apply cool compresses to your forehead, neck or armpits; and rest. If symptoms don’t improve or become more severe, seek medical care,” said Warren.

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