

Best Practices: Is Your Child Hydrated?

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When children exercise and play in HOT environments, parents and coaches need to remember children are at a physiological disadvantage as compared to adults. Consider the following:

- Children have a lower sweating capacity, limiting their ability to cool off.
- The smaller the child, the more heat they generate.
- Children have a shorter exercise tolerance time in the heat.
- Children acclimatize or get use to extreme changes in temperature slower than adults.

Regardless of the climate, when sweat loss exceeds fluid intake during activity, children become dehydrated. Parents and coaches constantly must be on the lookout for these warning signs of dehydration:

Thirst

Dizziness

Irritability

Cramping

Headache

Nausea

Weakness

Decreased performance

If **ANY** of these signs and symptoms appear:

- Immediately remove the child from activity.
- Allow the child to cool off and rest in the shade.
- Give the child plenty of water or sports drink.
- If symptoms persist, take the child to a medical care provider.