



FS/NAAF GARRISON SAFETY OFFICE

Outsmart the Darkness: Your Weekly Safety Spotlight



Hydration

Water makes up about 60% of our bodies and is crucial for nearly every bodily function—regulating temperature, transporting nutrients, lubricating joints, and even cognitive function! Dehydration, even mild, can lead to fatigue, headaches, decreased concentration, and reduced physical performance.

Importance of Hydration/ Results of Dehydration

Effects of Dehydration on the body

- Brain: impaired cognitive function; concentration, memory and mood impacted. Headaches common
- Muscles: fatigue, weakness and cramping. Performance significantly degraded
- Kidneys: strained as they struggle to filter waste products with less fluid. Kidney stones and kidney failure
- Digestive System: constipation and indigestion
- Temperature Regulation: sweat is primary cooling mechanism, less sweat= risk of overheating and heat-stroke

Quick Hydration Check

- Urine Color: Pale yellow is good! Dark yellow indicates dehydration
- Thirst: Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink! Thirst is a sign that you're already dehydrated
- Physical Symptoms: Pay attention to headaches, fatigue, dizziness, and muscle cramps

Beyond Water

Hydration Foods

- Fruits and vegetables such as watermelon, cucumbers, oranges and spinach are packed with water and valuable nutrients
- Eat well and supply your body with nutrients before strenuous activity and include snacks throughout the day

Electrolytes

- These minerals (sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium) are lost through sweat
- Electrolytes are vital for nerve and muscle function
- During periods of prolonged or intense activity, consider sports drinks (look for low-sugar options) or foods such as bananas, avocados and leafy greens

Avoid Alcohol and Energy Drinks

- Energy Drinks are often loaded with sugar and caffeine
- Energy Drinks can mask dehydration and provide a temporary boost followed by a crash
- Alcohol is a diuretic, meaning it increases urine production leading to fluid loss
- Neither provides adequate hydration

Proper Hydration

Drink Enough Water

- 8 glasses a day as a rule of thumb
- Increase as activity level, temperature, or sweat loss increases
 - Light Activity (Desk Job, gentle walk): 8-10 cups (64-80 oz) of water daily
 - Moderate Activity (brisk walking, gym workouts): 10-14 cups (80-112 oz) of water daily
 - High Activity (strenuous exercise, physically demanding job): 14+ cups (112+ oz) of water daily
- Approximately 1 cup every 15-20 minutes

Adjust for your environment

- Hot and humid weather significantly increases sweat rate
- Higher altitudes can also lead to faster dehydration

Account for individual factors

- Body weight, metabolism, and even certain medical conditions can influence your hydration needs