

The Warning Signs of Dehydration

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It may be hard to believe, but while you are standing on the sidelines bundled in a sweater on a crisp fall day watching your child running up and down the soccer field, she may become dehydrated.

Dehydration can begin when an athlete loses as little as 1 percent of body weight. In a 70-pound child, that is less than 1 pound of weight lost through sweat. As little as a 2% decrease in body weight from fluid loss (e.g. 1.2 lb for a 60-lb athlete) can lead to a significant decrease in muscular strength and stamina.

If your child tires easily and repeatedly in practice and appears irritable, and her performance suddenly declines, dehydration, and/or [inadequate calorie intake](#) may be the cause.

The following are also signs that your child is dehydrated:

- Dry lips and tongue
- Sunken eyes
- Bright colored or dark urine, or urine with a strong odor
- Infrequent urination
- Small volume of urine
- Apathy or lack of energy

The progressive effects of dehydration are serious. As a child becomes dehydrated, heart rate increases, blood flow to the skin decreases, and a body temperature can rise steadily to dangerous levels. To avoid a potentially life-threatening medical emergency, parents and coaches need to be familiar with the [symptoms of and treatment for heat-related illnesses](#)