

DANGERS OF DRINKING TOO MUCH WATER

When a person consumes an excessive amount of water and cells in their brain start to swell, the pressure inside their skull increases. This causes the first symptoms of water intoxication, which include:

- >HEADACHES
- >NAUSEA
- >VOMITING

Severe cases of water intoxication can produce more serious symptoms, such as:

- >DROWSINESS
- >MUSCLE WEAKNESS OR CRAMPING
- >INCREASED BLOOD PRESSURE
- >DOUBLE VISION
- >CONFUSION
- >INABILITY TO IDENTIFY SENSORY INFORMATION
- >DIFFICULTY BREATHING

A buildup of fluid in the brain is called cerebral edema. This can affect the brain stem and cause central nervous system dysfunction.

In severe cases, water intoxication can cause seizures, brain damage, a coma, and even death.

BOTTOM LINE: Drinking too much water can increase the pressure inside the skull. This can cause various symptoms and, in severe cases, become fatal.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Overhydration and water intoxication happen when a person drinks more water than their kidneys can get rid of via urine.

The amount of water is not the only factor - time also plays a role.

According to figures quoted in a 2013 study, the kidneys can eliminate about 20-28 liters of water a day, but they can remove no more than 0.8 to 1.0 liters every hour.

There are no official guidelines about how much water to drink. To avoid water intoxication, some sources recommend drinking no more than 0.8 to 1.0 liters of water per hour. 3 quarts maximum on any given day...

To avoid hyponatremia, it is important not to outpace the kidneys by drinking more water than they can eliminate.

The authors of the study report that hyponatremia symptoms can develop if a person drinks 3-4 liters of water in a short period, though they do not give a specific

time estimate.

According to one case report, soldiers developed symptoms after consuming at least 2 quarts (1.9 liters) of water per hour.

Another report describes the development of hyponatremia after drinking more than 5 liters in a few hours.

Water intoxication and prolonged hyponatremia also occurred in an otherwise healthy 22-year-old prisoner who drank 6 liters of water in 3 hours.

Finally, according to one report, a 9-year-old girl developed water intoxication after consuming 3.6 liters of water in 1-2 hours.

Bottom line: The kidneys can remove 20-28 liters of water per day, but they cannot excrete more than 0.8 to 1.0 liters per hour. Drinking more than this can be harmful.