DEHYDRATION means the body does not have as much water and fluids as it should. Dehydration occurs when the amount of fluid leaving the body is greater than the amount going back into the body.

**WHAT to WATCH FOR**
- dry skin
- dry mouth
- extreme thirst
- weakness
- light headed
- decreased urine
- dark colored urine
- feeling tired or less alert
- increase in smell of urine due to concentration

**SOME FACTS about DEHYDRATION**
- Approximately 60% of total body weight is water based.
- By the time an individual is thirsty, the body has already started the process of dehydration.
- For individuals with developmental disabilities and older individuals, the need to drink fluids may go unrecognized.

**RISK FACTORS (Causes)**
Recognition of the following conditions will help alert you to potential risks:
- needing assistance with drinking
- unable to get drinks without help
- unable to communicate thirst to someone
- refusing food and fluid
- individuals who may drool or have fluid falling from their mouth
- any loss of body fluid: vomit, sweat, diarrhea
- medications such as diuretics that cause loss of fluid
- medical conditions such as kidney disease; where fluid loss can possibly cause dehydration
WHAT TO DO

- NOTIFY DOCTOR to the possibility of dehydration
- ASK HOW MUCH FLUID the individual should have each day
- FREQUENTLY OFFER FLUIDS to individuals who have the ability to drink safely
- IF REFUSING FLUIDS AND ABLE TO DRINK, offer food items high in fluid content such as gelatin, watermelon, pudding, yogurt or ice cream
- Certain individuals with heart or kidney disease may need less fluid -- speak with their doctor for specific fluid intake requirements

EMERGENCY

If the individual is unable to take fluids safely, has extreme thirst, confusion, little or no urine output; notify the doctor immediately!