



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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For safety's sake: Drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids, eat fruits, veggies before drinking alcohol in summer heat

*By Chris Halagarda,
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FORT LEE, Va. – Summer is here and with it comes plenty of warmth and physical activity, yard work, fruit and vegetable gardens, friends, family, pools, beaches, picnics, barbeques — and alcohol. Whether you like it or not, alcohol is a big part of summer socializing. Unfortunately, without proper precautions, a few seemingly harmless alcoholic beverages can quickly become hazardous to your health.

According to the SCAN website – Sports, Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutrition – at <http://www.scandpg.org>, these are the ways that alcohol negatively affects active people:

- Acts as a diuretic by increasing urine volume and interfering with rehydration
- Puts active people at risk for dehydration, heat illness and muscle cramping
- Suppresses fat use as a fuel during exercise
- Interferes with recovery from exercise
- Increases the risk for nutrient deficiencies by decreasing vitamin and mineral absorption
- Adds calories and acts as an appetite stimulant, which can result in increased calories consumed
- Can interfere with sleep patterns by reducing time spent in deep, restful sleep

Although alcohol can be consumed in moderation as part of a healthy lifestyle and can even benefit the heart, it is important to follow simple guidelines and some common sense when you choose to indulge.

First, when you buy your alcohol, pick up some cases or jugs of water or sports drink from the commissary. You need to drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids early and often to maintain adequate hydration in the heat. Don't wait until you're feeling dehydrated before you start to rehydrate. In fact, you should pre-hydrate with fluids before you even begin drinking alcohol. Hospitals receive an enormous increase in emergency room visits from folks who enjoyed a "few cocktails" on a hot summer day. Even if you're not sweating heavily, you're still susceptible to severe dehydration.

Next, you want to snack on healthy foods, especially fruits and vegetables, throughout the day. Fruits and vegetables contain high amounts of water, which will help with hydration. This usually isn't a problem at picnics and barbeques, but all too often people don't make healthy food choices or don't eat at all while on the beach, leading to rapid intoxication and a higher risk for dehydration. Finally, don't drive! If you drink, call a friend or a cab.

When is there a problem? There are three levels of dehydration: mild, moderate and severe. Several cups of water and a well-balanced meal will cure most cases of mild dehydration. A sports drink with carbohydrate and sodium may be helpful, too.

For moderate dehydration, symptoms can include dry mouth, sunken eyes and poor skin turgor. Poor skin turgor is when the skin does not bounce back quickly when lightly pinched and released.

Finally, severe dehydration symptoms will include a rapid pulse, cold hands and feet, rapid breathing, blue lips, confusion or extremely lethargic behavior. Remember that moderate dehydration – accompanied by fever, vomiting, or diarrhea – is extremely dangerous and should be monitored closely. Electrolyte solutions or freezer pops are especially effective. Sport drinks contain a lot of sugar and can cause or worsen diarrhea, which can lead to severe dehydration. Either way, if you're dealing with these symptoms, don't ignore them! You must get to a hospital quickly and you may need intravenous fluids, which will reverse dehydration.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious

recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

-DeCA-

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*