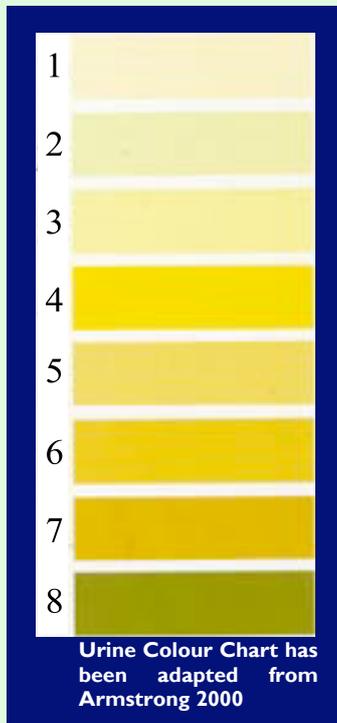


# Urine Colour Test for Dehydration



If the water in the body is balanced, the urine will be a pale straw or lemonade colour. When water loss from the body exceeds water intake, the kidneys need to conserve water, making the urine much more concentrated with waste products and subsequently darker in color.

Dark yellow urine is a sure indicator that the individual is dehydrated and that the fluid consumption must be increased.

The aim is to produce urine no darker than colour 3 of the Urine Color Chart. Desire to urinate less than twice per day and/ or producing urine darker than colour 3 in the chart indicate severe dehydration; the individual must start drinking immediately.

### **Interpretation:**

The urine colour should be compared to the chart to the left. The lower the number, the better the result. A urine color rating of 1, 2 or 3 is considered to be well-hydrated (Armstrong, 2000). Based on these results, changes in fluid intake can be made.

### **Precautions:**

Certain medicines and vitamins may cause the colour of the urine to change. If any of these have been taken, this test is unreliable.

The colours you see on this chart should only be used as a guide. If more accurate comparison is required, please go to an original source.

## Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when a person's body loses too much water. When a person stops drinking water or loses large amounts of fluids because of diarrhea, vomiting, or sweating, the body reabsorbs fluid from the blood and other body tissues.

By the time a person becomes severely dehydrated, there is no longer enough fluid in the body to get blood to the vital organs and the person may begin to go into shock, which is life-threatening.

Dehydration is very dangerous for infants, small children, and older adults. It is most dangerous for newborns. Watch closely for its early signs anytime there is an illness that causes a high fever, vomiting, or diarrhea.

### **Early signs of dehydration include:**

- Increased thirst.
- Dry mouth and sticky saliva.
- Reduced urine output with dark yellow urine.

### **Symptoms of moderate dehydration include**

- Extreme thirst.
- Dry appearance inside the mouth and the eyes don't tear.
- Decreased urination, or half the number of urinations in 24 hours (usually 3 or fewer urinations). Urine is dark amber or brown.
- Lightheadedness that is relieved by lying down.

### **Severe dehydration is life-threatening. Symptoms that require emergency care (even if only one of them is present) include:**

- Altered behavior, such as severe anxiety, confusion, or not being able to stay awake.
- Faintness that is not relieved by lying down, or light-headedness that continues after standing for 2 minutes.
- Weak, rapid pulse.
- Cold, clammy skin or hot, dry skin.
- Little or no urination.
- Loss of consciousness.