

BMMC Rider Training

Hydration and... Monkey Butt

I. Physiology of Hydration:

Physiologic control of hydration is maintained by the kidneys, which have the ability to increase the amount of water reabsorbed into the body.

Decreased urine volume is one sign of dehydration. If your **urine color appears darker**, this also indicates a state of dehydration as the



kidneys are trying to retain the majority of water volume passing. Additionally, **thirst** informs the body when it is time to increase fluid intake. As we ride and the outside air temperatures increases, control of body core temperature must be maintained. It cools itself by sweating to facilitate heat loss. If the sweat is not rapidly evaporated (e.g. as

in humid environments) higher sweating will occur to accomplish the cooling effects. Sweat contains a large amount of sodium and chloride (salt), so if you are already in a dehydrated state the sweat concentrations of sodium and chloride are further elevated which further increases your body's salt loss.

A. Impact of Dehydration:

The normal indoor cool body begins any activity with normal total amount body water. Without replenishing that water over an extended period of time, dehydration can occur. The impact of water volume depletion (dehydration) can influence the body in several ways. Heat exhaustion occurs as the body loses its ability to cool itself. Cramping can occur simply from muscle fatigue. And heart function can be altered, thereby hindering the hearts own "thermostat", and decreasing the circulating blood volume. These all produce a marked decreased in performance.

The consequence of dehydration is a lack of transport of body-generated heat to the skin surface to cool the body temperature. As the salt depletes below normal levels symptoms of fatigue, muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, confusion, and disorientation begin to sur-

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face, followed by heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If not properly treated it can progress to brain nerve damage.

B. Restoring Hydration:

The goal is to create sufficient urine output by drinking liquids slowly. In addition, eating small amounts of salted snacks and sodium-containing foods at meals can help increase thirst and retention of consumed fluids. Gatorade type drinks are best in helping with water retention. The object is to prevent excessive dehydration. During a ride it is best to make frequent stops (about every two hours) to drink fluids and eat a small snack low in sugar and to urinate.



After the ride "stock up" on fluids high in salt content (Gatorade type) amounting to roughly the amount of weight loss for the day. Huh? Relax, we're only talking about two to three cups per pound (maybe a liter bottle or so). You really want to consume this **before** the adult beverages to give your kidneys a chance to do their thing prior to the next assault on them. Refreshments like soda, coffee (or any caffeinated drink) or alcohol can actually contribute to dehydration, instead of helping to alleviate it.


Hydrate before you ride - Drink before you get thirsty - Thirst is a very late sign of dehydration!



C. OK, I got the hydrate thing. Anything else I should know?

- **Bare skin absorbs MORE heat from the sun:** Wear loose cotton long sleeved shirts to absorb moisture and help in the cooling. Hot air on your skin at a temperature higher than your body temperature (98.6°F) *will* heat you and dehydrate you.
- **Don't wear** cotton underwear (see Monkey Butt below).
- **Sport drinks:** Are supposed to replace not only fluids but also the essential electrolytes the body loses.

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- **Schedule rest stops:** Get some AC - **cool off frequently.** In Florida and southern states, it can be like a sauna. High humidity and miserable and sticky means get some AC, stop in a rest area, 7-11, Cracker Barrel, wherever, but cool off. You'll know when its time to go again.
- **Carry bottled water:** Like it cold or cool? Buy an icepack or carry a large Ziplock bag and fill it with ice often (it will melt quickly). A hydration pack, such as a CamelBak, will work just fine, but the liquid in the tube gets hot.

- **Eat salt,** to avoid low body levels (e.g. tablets or a bag of salted peanuts).
- **Chapstick:** Keep your lips from cracking.
- **Wet neck-wraps:** If your core is overheated then the blood moving to all your extremities, especially your head, is overheated. Your neck may feel cool but you may be overheated. DRINK and take salt! Stop and cool off.
- **Use sunscreen on all exposed skin.**
- **Helmets:** Studies show that motorcycle helmets will lessen the likelihood of dehydration by diminishing the effects of hot wind on the neck and face by helping to retain body moisture.

V. Monkey Butt... And The Prevention Thereof

I feel your pain.



What is it? **Monkey Butt** is the motorcycle euphemism for chafed skin "down under", and is no laughing matter. Monkey Butt is caused by moisture on the skin and rubbing against material. The chafing occurs when friction against the skin causes irritation and soreness (understatement). Skin chafing prevention is the first step to enjoying a long hot

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ride, and Anti-Monkey Butt Powder won't do it, folks. You need to prevent it in the first place.

TIP: A good pair of seamless **microfiber bike underwear** from your the local athletic store goes a long way. You can spend hundred\$ on Gel pads, custom seats and whatever, but nothing works like a good set of briefs and seat cover that breathes. **Cotton is not your friend** when it comes to underwear! It absorbs the moisture rather than wick-it away. **Microfiber is the way to go!** Prevent chafing in the first place and you won't be desperate enough to go for any promise of cure, including diaper rash cream. **TOO LATE!**



A seat cover that allows air circulation under you to keep your "down under" dry (e.g. beads or sheepskins) are a sure cure for Monkey butt. Dry Butt, no chaffing = no Monkey Butt.



So is this a big problem?... only if you get it. Imagine dreading the next day's ride. You can buy pads, sit on the hotel pillow you "borrowed", and put baby cream all over you, it won't help. You need to *prevent* it to begin with. Take it from a guy who's been there, done that, and made the midnight waddle to Walgreens.

Hope this helps.