

# The Wellness News

Issue 21, July 2009



## Hydration - Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Water is essential to the diet because it is a part of every cell, tissue, and organ in your body. In fact, your body is made of more than 70% water. The water in your body plays an important role in:

- Regulating body temperature
- Removing waste from the body
- Carrying nutrients, oxygen, and glucose to body cells
- Providing moisture to skin and other tissues
- Cushioning the joints and strengthening muscles
- Regulating digestion

For these reasons, it's vital to stay well hydrated on a daily basis.

### How much water should you drink each day?

Water needs vary based on several factors, but the general recommendation (for healthy persons not exposed to heat stress) is to drink half of your body weight's amount of water in ounces. (For example: a 160 lb. person should drink 80 ounces of water throughout the day.)

Taking a closer look, the average person loses about 12.5 cups of fluid/water each day through basic body functions such as breathing, sweating, urination and bowel movements. These fluids are restored via the water content of the foods you eat and the fluids you drink. Food provides up to 20% of your total fluid intake, leaving a little more than 8 cups still needed from water or other beverages each day.

### Factors that influence water needs

- **Exercise:** An extra 1.5 to 2.5 cups of water should be enough for short periods of exercise. More intense exercise that exceeds an hour requires that you consume more water.
- **Environment:** Hot or humid weather cause you to sweat. Drink additional fluids during summer months to ensure you stay hydrated. In addition, increased elevation can trigger more frequent urination, which can be dehydrating as well.
- **Illnesses or health conditions:** Symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting and fever dehydrate the body causing an increased need for fluid intake.
- **Pregnancy or breast-feeding:** Women who are pregnant or nursing need extra fluids to stay hydrated. The Institute of Medicine recommends that pregnant women drink about 10 cups of fluids daily and women who breast-feed consume about 13 cups of fluids a day.

**Excessive thirst and increased urination can be signs of a more serious medical condition, so talk with your doctor if you notice either symptom.**

# The Wellness News

More...

## Ways to increase your water intake

- Keep a water bottle on you at all times.
- Stash full water bottles at your desk, in your gym bag, and near the TV and bedside.
- Aim to drink 8oz of fluid every hour for 8 hours and by the end of the work day, you'll reach your goal.
- Measure the amount of water in your usual glass or bottle and keep a tally of the number of glasses consumed. Most glasses hold more than 8 ounces, so you may be doing better than you think!
- Set a goal of being more than halfway to your water goal by lunchtime in order to help stay on track.
- If water is not your favorite drink, experiment a bit – add a splash of fruit juice, a squeeze of lemon or lime, or a sugar-free flavoring like Crystal Lite to find a taste you like.
- You may find iced water more appealing, or you may prefer room temperature or hot water.

Caffeinated and sweetened drinks are not part of the solution as they can actually contribute to dehydration.

## Are you getting enough water?

Signs of dehydration:

- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Infrequent urination
- Dry lips and mouth
- Constipation

Other signs of dehydration are nausea, increased body temperature, labored breathing, and dark colored urine (your urine should be light yellow in color). It is important to note that you should drink regularly throughout the day and before you feel thirsty. Feeling thirsty means you are already dehydrated.



**Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320**

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005