

The Importance of Water!

How much water do you really need?

For your body to function properly you must replenish its water. Food usually accounts for 20% of your total fluid intake, so if you consume a little more than 8 cups of water a day along with your normal diet you will typically replace your lost fluids.



One approach in water intake is the 8 x 8 rule. Drink 8 eight ounce glasses of water per day. Many people use this basic rule as a guideline for how much water you should have each day.

If you drink enough fluid so that you rarely feel thirsty and produce 6.3 cups or more of colorless or slightly yellow urine a day, your fluid intake is probably adequate. Also note that often feeling hungry is a sign of thirst. So have a glass of water before turning to a high carbohydrate or high calorie food.

What influences your water needs?

You may also need to modify your fluid intake depending on how active you are, the climate you live in, your health status, and if you're pregnant or breast-feeding.

If you engage in an activity that makes you perspire, you need extra water. 1.5 to 2.5 cups should suffice, but exercise lasting more than an hour requires more fluid intake.

For intense exercise, use a drink that contains sodium to replace what is lost in perspiration and reduce the chances of developing hyponatremia, which can be life-threatening. Also continue to replace fluids after exercising. (**Hyponatremia** is a metabolic condition in which there is not enough sodium (salt) in the body fluids outside the cells. Symptoms include: abnormal mental status, confusion and decreased consciousness)

Hot climates or humid weather can make you perspire more and requires additional intake of fluid. Heated indoor air also can cause your skin to lose moisture.

Signs of illness, such as fever, vomiting and diarrhea, cause your body to lose additional fluids. You should drink more water and you may need oral rehydration solutions. Also, you may need increased fluids if you develop certain conditions, including bladder infections or urinary tract stones.



Staying Safely Hydrated

It's not a good idea to use thirst alone as a guide for when to drink. By the time you become thirsty it's possible to be slightly dehydrated. As you get older your body is less able to sense dehydration and send your brain signals of thirst.



To ward off dehydration make water your beverage of choice and consider the following:

- Drink a glass of water with each meal and between each meal
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise
- Substitute sparkling water for alcoholic drinks at social gatherings
- If you drink water from a bottle, thoroughly clean or replace the bottle often

Excessive thirst and urination can be signs of a serious medical condition. If you're concerned, check with your medical doctor.

Water is your body's principal component!

Water makes up about 60 % of your body weight. Every system in your body depends on water. Water flushes toxins out of vital organs, carries nutrients to your cells and provides a moist environment for ear, nose and throat tissues.

Lack of water can lead to dehydration, making it hard for your body to carry out normal function and even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired.

Water is a natural appetite suppressant. Do not underestimate the power of this statement. Lack of water can lead to over eating. Your brain does not differentiate between hunger and thirst. So, when you think you are feeling hungry your body may be signaling you that you are thirsty!

Bottled Water is Not Just Water in a Bottle!

Here are some descriptions:

Still Water: Non-carbonated and can be spring, well or municipal tap water.

Spring Water: Whether still or sparkling it seeps or springs to the surface from underground aquifers. If it's not labeled "natural," it may have undergone processing, such as the addition of minerals.

Mineral Water: Contains dissolved mineral salts such as calcium, sodium, magnesium and iron. All waters have some mineral salts unless they are distilled.

Distilled Water: Is processed and free of almost all mineral salts.

Artesian Well Water: Water that is forced to the surface from confined underground pressure through pipes drilled through the upper confining layer of rock.

Sparkling Water: Carbonated, usually by carbon dioxide gas. Club soda is ordinary tap water with impurities removed, then carbonated with a special mixture of minerals added. Seltzers are tap water filtered and carbonated without added salts.

Naturally Carbonated: The water was effervescent at its underground source.

