



DEHYDRATION AND HOW MUCH WATER TO DRINK

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About 60% of your body is made up of one essential element—water. And maintaining that percentage of water is vital to your overall health!

Insufficient water intake deprives you of the health benefits that come with adequate hydration. For example, not taking in enough water makes you more susceptible to constipation and could increase your risk of kidney stones. Dehydration can also be dangerous in other ways. If you don't take in enough fluids in hot weather, you increase your risk of serious heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

What is Dehydration?

Dehydration happens when your body loses more water than you take in. Simply not drinking enough water or eating enough water-rich foods can make you dehydrated. Drinking alcoholic beverages, which are diuretics (they make you expel more water), without complementing each drink with at least one glass of water can cause dehydration—and add to hangover symptoms.

Sweating can also cause dehydration. The average person has 2.6 million sweat glands that help your body maintain an appropriate temperature by sweating. When athletes perform, they can lose up to 6-10% of their water weight by sweating.

Dehydration impacts brain function and energy levels. Studies have found that even mild losses of your body's total water may impair concentration, memory, and mood while also impacting feelings of anxiety and fatigue. Anyone from infants to elderly adults can become dehydrated. Symptoms of dehydration in adults include:

- › Dry mouth, cracked lips
- › Thirst
- › Dark-colored urine
- › Confusion
- › Dizziness



Infants may show similar symptoms of dehydration but may also have sunken eyes, lack of tears, producing fewer wet diapers, or irritability.

How much water should you drink?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health recommends drinking 1 cup of water for every 15 to 20 minutes of moderate activity in moderate conditions. So, if you are doing rigorous exercise or are in a hot climate, know that you need to drink more than that to stay hydrated. However, this is just a guideline, and paying attention to your body is essential. Drink water when you are thirsty and stop when your thirst is quenched!

Ways to drink more water:

- › Drink a glass of water with every meal .
- › Skip the soda and sugary beverages .
- › For each alcoholic beverage you drink, drink one glass of water.
- › Get into the habit of drinking water after you take a bathroom break.
- › Flavor your water by adding fresh fruit, vegetables, or herbs to a water pitcher or an infuser water bottle. Try: strawberries, lemon, raspberries, blueberries, cucumbers, celery, mint, ginger.

- › Download a free app to keep track of your water intake and set reminders to drink.
- › Carry a reusable water bottle with you. Stainless steel bottles will help keep your water cool throughout the day. There are even reminder devices you can attach to your bottle that will flash when it is time for you to drink more water.
- › Thirst is sometimes confused with hunger, so try “snacking” on water before actually snacking.
- › If you really do need to eat, choose water-rich foods such as cucumber (96%), zucchini (95%), watermelon (92%), and grapefruit (91%). Approximately 20% of our fluid intakes comes from food.

Staying hydrated impacts your whole body – incorporate more water into your diet for a healthier life!

References:

1. [Keeping Workers Hydrated and Cool Despite the Heat](#)
2. [Dehydration: Mayo Clinic](#)
3. [Easy Ways to Drink More Water Every Day](#)