

A Few Questions on Hydration

Why is it so important to drink water?



Water is the essence of life and the basis of all living matter.

The human body's survival and proper functioning depend on adequate hydration.

In fact, water is the main constituent of the body, amounting to - on average - 60% of one's body weight (the exact quantity varies per person, with age and gender). The body can survive up to several weeks without food, but only a few days without water.

Water is an important nutrient and vital to our health. Adequate water intake is essential for our body. Insufficient water will affect physical and mental performance: every system in the human body, from cells and tissues, to vital organs, depends on water for regulation.

- Water helps to carry nutrients to the cells in our bodies and oxygen to our brain
- Water allows the body to absorb and assimilate minerals, vitamins, amino acids, glucose and other substances
- Water helps to regulate body temperature
- Water flushes out toxins and dissolves waste
- Water acts a lubricant for joints and muscles

Did you know that?

The brain is made of 75% water

Bones have 22% water content

Blood is composed of 95% water

How much water do I need to drink?

In a temperate climate we lose approximately 1.5 L - 2 L of water every day through breathing, sweat, urine and bowel movements.

Water intake can come from different sources including from different beverages, from food (the moisture content of fruits and vegetables for example) and of course from drinking water.

Dietary guidelines vary from one country to the other, however there is a general consensus among health professionals that approximately 1.5 L – 2 L of fluid intake per day provides adequate hydration and allow the body to replenish daily water loss. With intense physical activity and hot weather, more liquid may be required.

Some recommendations include:

- World Health Organization (WHO) *: 1.4 L to 4.5 L per day, depending on age, sex and climatic conditions *(Domestic Water Quantity, Service, Level and Health, WHO 2003)
- European Food Safety (ESFA) *: Total water intake per day 2 L-2.5 L
- UK Food Standard Agency : 1.2 L per day from fluids
- France - Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments: 2.3 L of which they recommend 1L from foods and 1.3 L from fluids
- Belgium – Conseil Supérieure d’Hygiène: 2.5 L of which they recommend 1.5 L from drinking water.

How do I know if I am drinking enough water?

Even a slight loss of water can deregulate the body. Feeling thirsty and tired could be symptoms of dehydration (see below).

How can I tell if I am dehydrated?

Dehydration occurs when the body's daily water loss is not replenished. Generally your body is dehydrated well before the time you feel thirsty. Often signs such as a parched mouth, dry skin, headaches, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, lack of concentration, little or no urination, can indicate that you have an insufficient amount of water in your system. It is important to keep your body well hydrated, for a loss of even 1% of water could lead to the above symptoms, while a 10% drop in water could be fatal.

Water is the best and most natural way to hydrate!

Water is an excellent choice for healthy hydration. A natural drink without additives, artificial sweeteners or colouring, it is an essential nutrient upon which the body's entire system depends.

While other beverages may provide some hydration, alcoholic drinks, sodas, coffee and other caffeinated drinks may actually act as diuretics. Water is a good option. Drink water! Stay healthy!