

WATER: ESSENTIAL but OFTEN FORGOTTEN

Water is the single most important nutrient we can put into our body. The importance of water in our diet cannot be understated and humans have an absolute need for water each day to sustain life and health. Our body requires plenty of water just to maintain itself and, for anyone who wants to lose weight, water is essential.

According to mayoclinic.com, our body is at least 60 percent water and replenishing the water we lose every day is very important. Water helps our body to maintain bodily fluids, flush toxins from our cells and organs and carry nutrients to cells. It provides moisture for the delicate tissues of our ears, nose and throat. Bodily fluids aid in many functions of our body; including: digestion, circulation, creation of saliva, absorption through our gastro-intestinal tract, transportation of various nutrients and maintenance of body temperature.

Dr. F. Batmanghelidj writes in his, "Water: For Health, For Healing, For Life," book that, "Water acts as a joint lubricant, helps keep your brain functioning properly, reduces the effects of aging by keeping skin smoother and clearer and increases the efficiency of your immune system." It helps dissolve nutrients and minerals so they are available to the body and lessens the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste (bi-products from our cellular physiology).

Individual requirements vary. The amount depends on a number of factors including: age, health, activity level, climate, height and weight. There are a number of ways to estimate water requirements. The Institute of Medicine recommends that men consume approximately 3 liters (13 cups) of water daily and women drink 2.2 liters (9 cups) of total water daily. It's common to hear a person give the "eight times eight rule as a guide for water intake. However, it is merely a guideline and may be well off-the-mark for some people. Certainly, an eight year old girl does not have the same water requirements as a 250 pound man. For those that like a little math, a more specific calculation would be to divide your weight in half which equals the number of ounces per day needed. (Example: 150 pounds divided by 2 equals 75 ounces of water per day. Now converting ounces to cups where 1 cup equals 8 ounces; the above example of 75 ounces of water per day divided by 8, equals about 10 cups of water per day.)

Interestingly enough, upon average adults lose about 1.5 liters of water daily through urine. There is an additional loss of about 1 liter through breathing, sweating and bowel movements. Consuming high-water content foods such as vegetables and fruits can account for over 20 percent of the day's fluid requirements. Therefore, 2 liters (8 cups) of water daily would usually replenish lost fluids. The amount of water specifically needed in your diet will always depend on your lifestyle and your health. Your water requirement will increase if you exercise heavily, are pregnant or nursing, you are ill, live in a very hot and humid climate, or have recently had diarrhea or bouts of vomiting. Whereas, heart failure, compromised kidney, adrenal and liver function can decrease water excretion and require a more limited intake of water.

Inadequate water intake can cause dehydration. Amazingly, 1-2 percent loss in body weight can create fatigue and tiredness. Regardless of whether you use tap water or bottled water, you must be sure to get enough water every day to avoid dehydration which can cause electrolyte abnormalities, shock, coma and kidney failure if it becomes too severe. Signs of dehydration include: headache, thirst, decreased urination, muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, dry eyes and lightheadedness.

According to the Institute of Medicines, Food and Nutrition, thirst is usually a reliable guide for most healthy people as to your need for nutritional water intake. For those wanting something more concrete on which to base their decisions, the same organization sets the daily hydration recommendation at 91 ounces per day for women and 125 ounces per day for men. Eighty percent of all those totals are expected to come from drinking liquids and the remaining 20 percent will come from the food eaten during the day. Utilizing the formula previously provided will give you an estimate of the necessary ounces and/or cups of water needed per day. Regardless of whether you use tap water or bottled water, which according to a study conducted by the Natural Resources Defense, there is no assurance that bottled water is anymore or less safe than tap water; you must drink water.

Common sense will help us take the numbers of necessary ounces or cups of water needed and adapt them to fit our own lifestyle. If we work outside in a hot environment or have a strenuous exercise regime, we will lose more water due to perspiration; and thus, we need more fluid replenished. If you spend a lot of time in extreme cold conditions, you will rapidly lose moisture from your lungs. All of these factors must be taken into consideration when deciding just how much water is enough for you in a day.

Once we've considered the amount of water needed in our diet, we might become alarmed to find out that we don't drink as much as we should. I would recommend that if you want to increase your water intake, try the following:

- Carry a bottle of water with you whenever you run errands and engage in your daily activities outside the home.
- Enjoy warm or iced herbal tea between meals.
- Keep a glass or bottle of water at your work desk.
- Drink an 8 ounce glass of water upon rising in the morning and drink a glass of water with each meal.
- Every time you urinate, drink a glass of water to replenish your system.
- Add a squeeze of lemon or lime juice to your water to increase flavor or add flavored Stevia.
- Drink water before, during and after exercise.
- Replace more alcoholic beverages with sparkling water and a slice of lemon or lime.
- Enjoy a diet rich in vegetables; many of which have high water content.

Much like the planet we live on, the majority of our body is composed of water. How much water we need to drink each day is based on our own body make-up and lifestyle. However, with summer approaching and people typically becoming more active; we know that when muscles don't have adequate food in them, you are likely to feel muscle fatigue. The same is true of water. Now that you know the importance of consuming proper amounts of water; utilize the above factors when taking into consideration how much is enough water for you in a day. This is especially important when outside whether it's exercising, working in the garden or mowing your yard. Your health and bodily functions depend on it!

For more information pertaining to our "Healthy Life by Design" program, please visit us on the web: www.naturalwellnesscentre.net. This article is authored by Dr. James R. Grillo, a chiropractic physician and director of Natural Wellness Centre; phone number: 740-687-0279.