

Be the Real You

**The importance of hydration and
effective ways to stay hydrated**

SHED



Hydration is often an overlooked, yet crucial component of a healthy lifestyle. Water plays a vital role in numerous bodily functions, from digestion and metabolism to detoxification and maintaining energy levels. Understanding the benefits of staying hydrated and learning effective strategies to keep your fluid levels in check can enhance your overall health and well-being. If you want to feel your best, here are some facts and suggestions that can help!

Benefits of proper hydration

Digestion and nutrient absorption

- **Role:** Water helps break down food, facilitating nutrient absorption.
- **Benefit:** Promotes optimal gut health and improves digestion, allowing food to move smoothly through the digestive tract and preventing constipation.

Appetite control

- **Role:** Proper hydration can prevent mistaking thirst for hunger.
- **Benefit:** Reduces unnecessary snacking and overeating.

Energy levels

- **Role:** Adequate hydration helps your body burn calories efficiently.
- **Benefit:** Supports weight management and energy conversion.

Joint lubrication

- **Role:** Water helps lubricate joints and cushion tissues.
- **Benefit:** Proper hydration reduces joint pain and inflammation.

Brain function

- **Role:** Adequate hydration increases blood flow to the brain, delivering more oxygen and nutrients necessary for cognitive tasks.
- **Benefit:** Proper hydration helps promote mental clarity and reduces the likelihood of feeling foggy-brained.

Boost in metabolism

- **Role:** Adequate hydration helps your body burn calories efficiently.
- **Benefit:** Supports weight management and energy conversion.

Natural detoxification

- **Role:** Water aids in flushing toxins and supports kidney and liver function.
- **Benefit:** Assists in detoxifying the body and removing unhealthy fats.

Physical activity performance

- **Role:** Staying hydrated helps maintain blood volume and regulates body temperature.
- **Benefit:** This can enhance endurance and prevent early fatigue during exercise.

Skin and hair health

- **Role:** Hydration maintains skin elasticity and moisture.
- **Benefit:** Promotes healthier skin and stronger hair.

Healthy blood pressure

- **Role:** Staying hydrated helps ensure adequate blood volume, because water is a major component of blood.
- **Benefit:** Adequate blood volume can prevent excessive strain on the heart and help maintain stable blood pressure.

How much water do you need?

General recommendations

Women:

- 2.7 liters (9 cups, ~72oz) per day (including fluids from beverages and food) or minimum of 64oz/day

Men:

- 3.7 liters (13 cups, ~104oz) per day (including fluids from beverages and food) or minimum of 64z/day

Personalized calculation

- Formula: Aim for $\frac{1}{2}$ of your bodyweight in ounces per day.
 - Example: A person weighing 180lbs should aim for 90oz of water daily.

Factors affecting hydration needs

- Individual variability: Age, weight, health conditions, and activity levels
- Environmental factors: Temperature and humidity

Tips for staying hydrated

Daily hydration habits

- Drink a glass of water upon waking.
- Keep a reusable water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day.
- Drink water before, during, and after meals.
- Sip water throughout the day, not just when thirsty.

Hydration at work and exercise

- Keep water at your desk.
- Use apps or alarms to remind yourself to drink water.
- Hydrate before, during, and after physical activity.

Flavor and variety

- Infuse water with fruits, vegetables, and herbs:
 - Combinations: Cucumber, lemon, and mint; grapefruit and rosemary; watermelon, lime, and basil; lemon and ginger; lime and thyme

Alternative hydrating options

- Herbal teas (unsweetened)
- Coconut water (natural electrolytes)
- Sugar-free electrolyte beverages or packets
- Foods with high water content like cucumbers, celery, watermelon, strawberries, spinach, and tomatoes
- A pinch of Himalayan or Celtic salt in water (consult a doctor if you have health concerns related to salt)

Recognizing and addressing dehydration and overhydration

Signs of dehydration

- Thirst: A sign that you need more water
- Dry mouth and Lips: Indicates dehydration
- Dark urine: Should be pale yellow; dark indicates concentration
- Fatigue and dizziness: Common symptoms of dehydration
- Headache: Can be caused by insufficient fluid intake
- Constipation: Resulting from lack of water in the digestive system

Actionable steps

- Increase water intake when experiencing signs of dehydration.
- Monitor urine color and adjust hydration habits accordingly.
- Monitor intake by paying attention to how much you're drinking. Try to spread out your fluid intake throughout the day instead of drinking all at once.
- Balance with electrolytes by eating food rich in electrolytes such as bananas, oranges, and spinach. This can help maintain fluid balance in your body. Consider electrolyte beverages such as the ones listed above.

Conclusion

Staying properly hydrated is fundamental for maintaining good health, optimizing bodily functions, and enhancing overall well-being. By understanding your hydration needs and incorporating practical hydration strategies, you can significantly improve your quality of life and health outcomes.