

Hydration & You

Essential for life itself, water plays many important roles in the body.

Cells

Have you ever wondered how all the nutrients in the foods and beverages you eat and drink get to where they need to go? The water in your body is crucial for transporting carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals and other important nutrients to your cells. Your cells then produce energy to help keep you going.

Kidneys

Water is essential for kidneys, helping them to remove waste, toxins and excess nutrients from the body. A well hydrated healthy person's kidneys filter approximately 180L (190 quarts) of water each day.

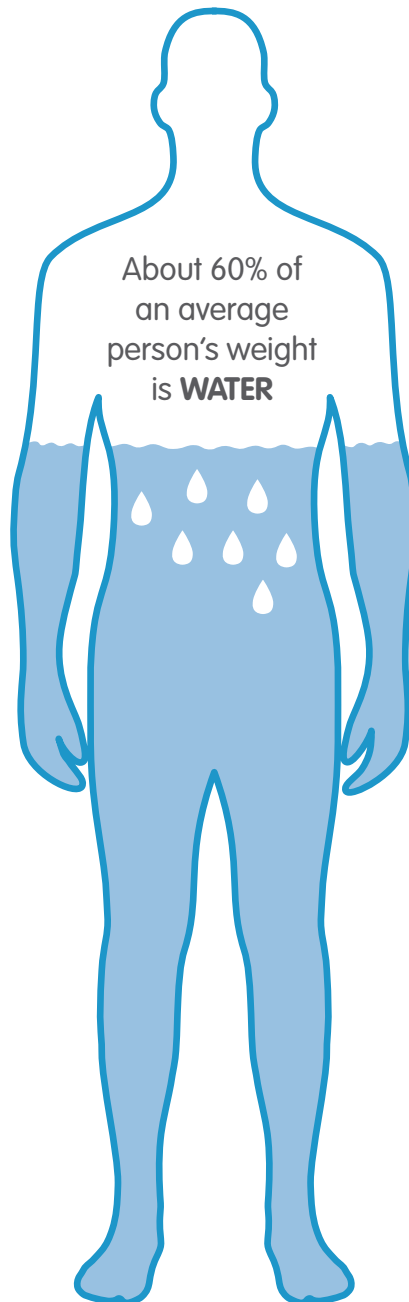
Skin

Good hydration helps preserve skin's elasticity, softness and coloring. Water bathes skin cells, inside and out.

Temperature

You may already know sweat is your body's way of cooling itself. But did you know that water helps make this possible? Your body's water helps dissipate heat, regulating your overall body temperature.

If your body becomes too hot, water is released by perspiring, thus removing heat from the body. If the water lost through sweat is not replaced, your body can become dangerously overheated.



Brain

Adequate hydration is important for proper functioning of your brain. Mild dehydration – as little as a 1% to 2% loss in body weight due to fluid deficiency – can impair your ability to concentrate. And loss of more than 2% body weight due to dehydration can affect your brain's processing abilities and impair short-term memory.

Heart

Fluids are important for healthy heart function and play a role in normalizing blood pressure. Dehydration decreases cardiac output, which may lead to increased heart rate and reduced blood pressure.

Digestive Tract

Water aids in the digestion of your food – it's found almost everywhere in the digestive tract from the saliva in your mouth to the solution of enzymes of your lower intestine. Water also helps dissolve nutrients so that they may be absorbed into your bloodstream and delivered to your cells.

Muscles & Joints

Muscles and joints, in addition to your bones, help you to stand, sit, move and go about your daily life. Water helps cushion joints and keeps muscles working properly. In fact, approximately 70 to 75 percent of your muscle is actually made up of water.



*The Beverage Institute
For Health & Wellness*

The Beverage Institute for Health & Wellness is a scientific organization, within The Coca-Cola Company, that supports scientific research, education and outreach to better understand the role that beverages play in nutrition and health around the world.

Are you thirsty?

Commonly Asked Questions

Q: How much fluid do I need a day?

A: The Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing unbiased, evidence-based and science-based advice, released the following adequate fluid intake recommendations in 2004.

Adult women need approximately 11.5 cups of total fluid a day from beverages and food, while men need approximately 16 cups a day. Children ages 1-3 need approximately 5.5 cups (1.3L) of total fluid a day from beverages and food, while children ages 4-8 require 7.5 cups (1.7L) a day.

While you can meet your daily fluid intake requirement with water alone, keep in mind that all beverages, including water, tea, coffee, soft drinks, sports drinks, milk, and juice, as well as foods with a high water content like soup, fruits and vegetables, contribute towards this recommendation. On average, about 80 percent of an individual's total water needs are met by drinking beverages and about 20 percent is provided by food.

Q. Can caffeinated beverages help keep me hydrated?

A: While caffeine may have a mild, short-term diuretic effect in individuals who do not normally consume caffeine, studies have shown that this is not the case for people who regularly consume caffeine. As a result, a report on water needs released in 2004 by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences concluded that all beverages, including those with caffeine, contribute to hydration.

Q: Do I need a sports beverage when I exercise?

A: During intense exercise lasting for more than one hour, The American College of Sports Medicine recommends that carbohydrates be consumed at a rate of 30-60 grams per hour. This can be achieved without compromising fluid delivery by drinking a sufficient amount of a solution containing 4-8 percent carbohydrates.







The ACSM also recommend consuming approximately 0.5-0.7 g of sodium per liter of water to replace that lost from sweating. Fluid replacement solutions with added electrolytes (primarily NaCl) enhance palatability and reduce the probability for development of hyponatremia. Regular sports drinks are formulated in light of these recommendations.

Q: Can I get dehydrated when it is cold outside?

A: Although people tend to perspire more in hot weather, dehydration can also be a problem during the winter months. High rates of energy expenditure in winter activities such as snowboarding, ice skating, and skiing and use of heavy clothing can cause significant sweating and fluid loss.

So, watch out for dehydration, which can lead to fatigue, headaches and muscle cramps, even in the winter months. The best way to protect yourself is by drinking fluids throughout the day.

Tips for Staying Hydrated

-  Have a beverage with every meal and snack.
-  Choose beverages that you enjoy. Several studies show that children and adults consume about 45% to 50% more liquid when it's flavored vs. plain water.
-  Eat more fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables tend to have a high water content, which makes them a great option for helping you meet your hydration needs.
-  Don't exclusively rely on thirst. Sometimes thirst is not a reliable measure of hydration because of medications or other health conditions. Keep a water bottle or beverage at your desk, in your car, in your bag or wherever you will be reminded to drink.
-  Keep beverages at moderate temperature. Fluids served at moderate temperatures -- temperatures that are neither hot nor cold -- tend to be consumed in greater volumes.
-  Choose beverages that fit your activity level and lifestyle. If you are watching your calories, consider choosing a low-calorie beverage or create your own refreshing light beverages.

For more information about hydration and the role of beverages, please visit www.beverageinstitute.org