

## Healthy Hydration

**Water makes up about 60% of the human body. Taking in sufficient water through food and beverages is essential to good health.** Water helps maintain body temperature, allows for proper kidney and heart function, carries nutrients like oxygen to cells, aids in digestion and removal of waste, and lubricates joints. Even mild dehydration can cause problems with confusion, weakness, muscle cramps, headache, fatigue, decreased blood pressure and dizziness, and a higher risk of falling. With warm weather, drinking enough fluids is even more critical. Children also need special care to stay well hydrated. **See next page for more on this, and healthy beverage ideas.**



### Why are fluids important?

**Did you know that seniors are at higher risk of dehydration?** With aging, a person's sense of thirst becomes less acute. Frail elders may have a harder time getting up to get a drink when they're thirsty. They may rely on caregivers who can't sense that they need fluids. The loss of kidney function with aging also makes kidneys less able to conserve fluids. Some seniors may refrain from drinking too much due to concerns about incontinence, mobility issues or general reluctance to get up regularly to go to the bathroom. In addition, some medications prescribed for high blood pressure or heart problems may increase urine output. Waiting until you feel thirsty to drink usually means you may already be slightly dehydrated, so it is important to drink even when you aren't feeling thirsty.

**How to avoid dehydration:** Fluids lost daily from respiration, perspiration, urination and elimination need to be replaced. In general, larger people need to drink more water. Environmental (indoor or outdoor) temperature, illness, and activity level make a big difference on how much fluid is lost daily. Fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea greatly increase fluid needs. Dehydration increases the risk of hospitalization to treat hyperthermia (overheating of the body), heart problems, and kidney failure. Keep a water bottle next to your bed or favorite chair, and take a water bottle with you when traveling.

**How much fluid is needed daily?** Normal needs for fluids vary widely from person to person. While body size is one factor, a general guideline is that most people should drink a **minimum of 6-8 cups** of non-alcoholic fluid daily. People obtain some water through their food by eating certain fruits, vegetables, yogurt, and soups. Discuss your needs with your health provider. Spread your intake of fluids out evenly between meals and snacks, so that every 2 hours or so you've consumed at least 8 ounces. People feel more alert and clear-headed when they are well hydrated. The color of one's urine is an effective way to tell if one is dehydrated. It should be **clear to pale yellow** in color. For a person with normal kidney function, a reduced urine output of under 500 ml (about 2 cups) per day is cause for concern. If urine is dark in color and low volume, begin replenishing fluids immediately, though seek medical attention if urine remains dark after drinking adequate fluid.

**What are the best choices?** Many popular beverages are high in sugar and calories, adding to weight gain and elevated blood sugars. Try to make most of the fluids you drink low in sugar or calorie-free — like water, seltzer, or hot or cold herbal teas. Try Celestial Seasoning cold brew teas for iced tea in 5 minutes! To sweeten iced coffee or tea, add homemade simple syrup\*. If you like sweet drinks like lemonade or sweet teas, dilute them with extra water to reduce the sugar and calories. Another healthy option is to mix 2-3 oz of juice with 8 oz of seltzer. The average 12 oz glass of juice contains 9 tsp of sugar!

### Choose a variety of foods with a high water content:

- Fruits: watermelon, oranges, strawberries, cantaloupe, honeydew, blueberries, grapefruit, pineapple, clementines
- Vegetables: iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, bell peppers, zucchini, baby carrots, celery
- Other ideas: yogurt, popsicles (make your own with juice), soups, Jell-O®, smoothies, low-fat milk, or coconut water

#### ICED TEA

Boil a small amount of water, about ½ cup. Pour into a mug with 2 herbal or regular teabags, and allow to steep 10-15 minutes. If adding sugar, do so now. Fill a large glass ¾ full of ice and pour the hot tea on top and stir. Great herbal choices include mint and fruity flavors.

#### ICED COFFEE

In a sealable jar, combine 2 teaspoons instant (regular or decaf) coffee granules with 3 Tbsp of very warm water and if desired, 1-2 tsp of sugar. Cover jar and shake until foamy. Pour into a glass full of ice, add 4-6 oz of milk, stir, and enjoy! *TIP: Freeze extra hot coffee into coffee ice cubes and add to iced coffee.*

#### \*SIMPLE SYRUP

To make 'simple syrup', a liquid sweetener to add to cold drinks: Combine in a medium saucepan 1 cup white sugar and 1 cup water and bring to a boil, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Cool and keep in fridge. Suggested serving size: 1-2 tsp. Unlike regular sugar, this will dissolve in cool liquids.

# Hydration and Children — and some healthy recipe ideas

For even more nutrition tips, see <http://www.foodbankwma.org/what-we-do/nutrition/nutrition-tips/>



Kids can be at increased risk of dehydration, especially in the summer when they are likely to be active in hot weather. Infants and small children are at an even higher risk, because they can lose relatively more fluid quickly. Pay attention if a young child is playing outside on a hot day, and encourage him or her to regular take water breaks. Look for the signs of dehydration (see box below).

If you suspect your child has become dehydrated, have the child sit in a cool spot out of the sun and drink water. Better yet, practice preventative measures by having him/her drink water before activity, as well as frequently during activity. Don't wait until your child (or you) is thirsty to get a drink. While sports drinks like Gatorade make many health claims, water is usually the best option. Gatorade and similar drinks are only appropriate in extremely high physical activity over prolonged periods. An average sports drink contains about 35 grams of sugar, plus chemical sweeteners and artificial colors.

## Signs of Dehydration in Children

- Weakness, fatigue
- Sunken eyes
- No tears
- Lack of energy
- Dry mouth and tongue
- Irritability
- Confusion
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Infrequent urination (check for dry diapers)

## Exercise and Hydration

When being physically active, regardless of your age, be sure to drink at least 2 cups of water about two hours before exercise. Then drink one to one and a half cups of water for every hour that you are active, and an additional cup within 30 minutes after you are done exercising or being active. Look for light colored urine to know you're on the right track. Even if you aren't being particularly active, be sure to sip on water throughout the day.

**Cold Water Tip:** If you like your water very cold, freeze half a bottle of water overnight, then fill the rest in the morning. That way you can sip away for a few hours and the water stays cool for quite awhile.

**Infused water:** "Infused water" is water to which fruits, vegetables, or herbs have been added to provide subtle flavors to drinking water when soaked for several hours. It provides a flavored water without any added sugar, to make the flavor more interesting than plain water. Use seltzer if you like fizz. You can make a batch of infused water by adding crushed strawberries or blueberries, watermelon or peach chunks, cantaloupe, lemon, lime, or orange slices to your water pitcher, then soaking it for a few hours or overnight in the fridge. Fruity and refreshing!

## Liquid Candy? Check your beverage label!

Many people are shocked by how much sugar is in sodas and fruit drinks. Health experts recommend that most women should get no more than **7 teaspoons (28 grams)** of added sugars per day, and men no more than **10 teaspoons (40 grams)**. (TIP: Divide grams of sugar by 4 to calculate the number of teaspoons of sugar). Although 100% fruit juice is naturally sweetened, it is best to limit juice to no more than 1 cup per day. Compare these figures with the following examples:

Sprite 20 oz	16 tsp	Pepsi 20 oz bottle	17 tsp	Sunkist Orange Soda 20 oz	21 tsp
Snapple lemon iced tea 16 oz	10.5 tsp	Cumb Farms 32 oz Slushie	18 tsp	Coca Cola 12 oz can	10 tsp
Gatorade lemon-lime 20 oz	8.5 tsp	Mega Monster Energy 24 oz	20 tsp	Cranberry juice cocktail 8 oz	7 tsp

Here are a few more recipes to try if you get bored with plain water. (TIP: The ginger tea is great for colds and nausea.)

### Strawberry-Lemon Infused Water

2 quarts water or seltzer  
2 lemons, sliced thin and de-seeded  
1 c chopped strawberries, gently pressed with back of a spoon (other options: peaches or watermelon)

Cut up fruit and add to a 2-quart jar or pitcher. Add water. Chill for at least 3 hours or overnight. Add ice and enjoy throughout the day.

### Cucumber Mint Infused Water

4 fresh mint leaves  
15 thin slices cucumber  
1 gallon water  
(Optional: juice of half a lemon for tang)

Stir water, cucumber, and mint leaves together in a large 1 gallon pitcher or jar. Let the flavors mix for about 3 hours or overnight in the fridge. Serve over ice. Strain and store in fridge up to 1 week.

### Honey Ginger Lemon Tea (35 cal/cup)

2 Tbsp fresh ginger, peeled and sliced  
2 Tbsp honey  
2 Tbsp lemon juice (fresh or bottled)  
4 c water

Bring everything to a boil and simmer for 20 minutes. Allow to sit for 40 minutes more, then strain tea and discard ginger pieces. Drink hot or cold. Store in fridge up to 1 week.