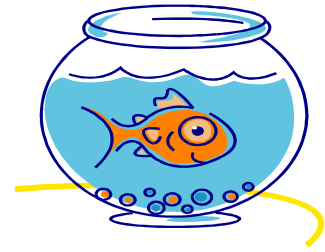


WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT DRINKING WATER?

Water is not just for plants and trees, reptiles and mammals, fish and birds. Water is the most prevalent molecule in YOUR body. In fact up to seventy percent of your body is composed of water. It is the primary component of all body fluids and is needed for every bodily function. [3]



How much water does the body need each day? The Institute of Medicine recommends that adult females should get about 72 ounces of water per day from fluids that they drink and adult males should get at least 100 ounces of water per day from the fluids they drink. [3]

Are there situations that increase the body's need for water? Yes, there are several situations that increase the body's need for water. Individuals living in warm climates will need additional fluids. Physical activity increases the body's need for water. Individuals who are ill with fever, vomiting or diarrhea will need extra fluid. High protein diets have a diuretic effect on the body and cause the body to excrete greater amounts of fluid. Individuals on high protein diets need increased amounts of fluids.

Why is it important to maintain adequate hydration? Hydrated bodies have higher energy levels, increased endurance and better muscle coordination than inadequately hydrated bodies. Hydrated brains remember more, think clearer and are more alert than inadequately hydrated brains. [3]

If the benefits of hydration do not motivate you to drink adequate amounts of fluids, maybe hearing about the consequences of dehydration will motivate you to drink more fluids. Dehydration feels bad. Symptoms of mild to moderate dehydration include thirst, hunger, headache, mental confusion, decreased motor control, decreased memory and attention span, fatigue, nausea and inability to maintain a healthy body temperature. Severe dehydration can cause death. [3]

Medical research has linked chronic dehydration to a multitude of chronic health problems including asthma, arthritis, type two diabetes, cataracts, back pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, heart burn, colitis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, kidney stones, migraines, multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. [2]

What are the best fluids to drink to maintain adequate hydration?

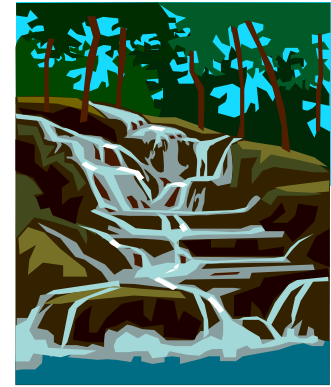
Hydration requirements are best met by plain water. The primary ingredient in all fluids is water. Most fluids can contribute toward meeting your body's daily need for water. However, all fluids are not created equal. There are a few fluids that are poor hydration sources.



Caffeine and alcohol are diuretics. There is a great amount of variability in how much diuresis a caffeinated or alcoholic beverage will produce when consumed. The two primary factors that are going to affect diuresis are the concentration of caffeine or alcohol in the beverage and the body's sensitivity to each of these substances. For example, a strong cup of coffee can cause the body to release a greater amount of fluid through the urine than what was contained in the cup of coffee. [2]

Drinks with high concentrations of sugar or corn syrup, like soda pop, can cause the body to "steal" water from other parts of the body to dilute the sweetened beverage and make it less concentrated. Highly sweetened beverages are another poor hydration source. [2]

What is the best kind of water to drink? There are three primary sources of drinking water in our country: 1) Surface water which comes from rivers, lakes, reservoirs or streams; 2) Well water which comes from underground; and 3) Spring water which is underground water that is forced up toward or to the surface. These water sources can be provided via city tap, from a private well or spring or purchased in a bottle.



The most important thing about the water that you choose to drink is that it comes from a documented uncontaminated source or it has been adequately filtered to remove contaminants. Solid carbon block filters are one kind of water filtering system that effectively and economically filters water. These filters remove chemicals, organic pollutants, radon and asbestos while leaving the ionic minerals intact. [2]

Why do we need to drink filtered water? Many sources of drinking water in the United States have been contaminated with varying levels of harmful chemicals as a result of leakage from underground fuel tanks, run off from agriculture fertilizer, treated sewage sludge and solid wastes buried in landfill dumps. [2] [1] Any one of the sources of water mentioned above can become contaminated. However, the closer the water source is to the surface, the greater the opportunity for it to be contaminated.

Should we all just drink bottled water? Bottled water comes from the surface water, well water or spring water. The purity of bottled water is going to depend on geographical location that it was taken from and the filtering and purification process that it went through at the bottling plant. Therefore the purity of bottled water is going to vary. There may or may not be information on the label indicating the purity of the water in the bottle.



Would it be best to drink distilled water? Distilled water is free of all contaminants. It is also free of health supporting ionic minerals. Hard water is rich in ionic minerals which are beneficial to a person's health. Research studies have shown that individuals who live in areas where the drinking water is highly mineralized experience improved health such as decreased rates of heart disease, increased bone density, good teeth health and even increased longevity. [1] Hard water can come from ground water (i.e. wells or springs) or from surface water (i.e. rivers, lakes, reservoirs or streams). Hard water can be contaminated so it is important to choose filtered mineral water.

Do water softeners filter contaminants out of the water? Water softeners do not filter out contaminants from tap water or well water. Water softeners exchange sodium ions for ions of other minerals and leave you with water that is high in sodium and low in other minerals. Consumption of softened water is linked to the development of cancer, heart attacks and strokes. [1]

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