



Summer Hydration

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Staying well-hydrated may seem like a simple task, but you actually may not be consuming enough fluids. The American Dietetic Association states at minimum, the average adult should consume eight 8-ounce glasses of water or water-based beverages every day. Like adults, active children over 8 years old need eight or more cups of fluids during the day. Younger children need four to five cups. But the actual amount you should consume is higher based on physical activity level, body muscle mass and exterior temperature. During hot, humid weather or physical activity, fluid loss for everyone can be even higher.

Although it's a great idea to keep water within reach at all times, snacking on water rich fruits and vegetables can provide your body with additional water. Fruit contains quite a bit of water, which you could probably tell if you've ever bitten into a peach or plum and felt the juices dripping down your chin! Vegetables, too, contain a lot of water – think of slicing into a fat tomato from the garden or crunching into a crisp stalk of celery.

It's important not to use thirst alone as a guide for when to drink. Kids don't think much about their hydration until they are thirsty and by that time the effects of dehydration have already begun to impact them. Also, as you get older your body is less able to sense dehydration and send your brain signals of thirst.

Knowing how to best help you and your family stay hydrated is important! Here are a few tips and thoughts to stay hydrated during the warmer months...

- ***Get enough water.***
Take water breaks during the day.
Buy a bottle of water next time you visit a vending machine.

Eat solid foods that supply a surprising amount of water like lettuce, watermelon, broccoli, grapefruit, and yogurt.

Drink cool water because you absorb it faster and usually drink more because it tastes better. Plain water is a great fluid-replacer.

- ***Drink often throughout the day especially if active.*** No matter what sport or fitness activity you enjoy, staying properly hydrated is important. Dehydration of just 1 to 2 percent of body weight can negatively influence performance.

The American Dietetic Association recommends that athletes should drink about 2 cups of fluids about two hours before exercise or competition. During exercise, they should start drinking early and drink regularly, such as one-half to 1 cup of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes. After exercising, they should drink at least 2 cups of fluid per pound of body weight lost during exercise.

- ***Stick with water.***

Some beverages especially those containing alcohol and caffeine, may lead to loss of body water.

If water is not your choice to drink, try drinking fruit juice diluted with plain water or add a slice of lemon or orange to your water for a refreshing beverage.

- ***Plan for hydration.***

Medications and diuretic warnings. If you take certain medications or diuretics you might need more than 8 glasses of water a day. Consult your physician.

If you're concerned about your fluid intake, check with your doctor or a registered dietitian.

Remember, as summer heats up you can help your body by drinking when you're thirsty and drinking extra water when it's warm outside!

For more information, contact a registered dietitian at www.eatrightwv.org.