

# Getting Enough Fluids

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## Why are fluids important?

- Our bodies are 60-70% water
- Water helps control: our body temperature, digest food, carry nutrients, remove waste, cushion our organs and joints
- Water is lost everyday through our: skin, kidneys, lungs, digestive tract

To keep our body working well, we must have enough fluid intake and replace the water that is lost.

## How much fluid is enough?

The amount of fluid each person needs varies depending on body size, losses, medical conditions, age, and sex. As a general recommendation, females should drink 9 cups of fluid a day and males should drink 12 cups of fluid a day.

In general, you need more fluid with:

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ✓ hot or dry climates         | ✓ constipation or diarrhea |
| ✓ a fever                     | ✓ vomiting                 |
| ✓ increased physical activity | ✓ higher altitudes         |
| ✓ increased fibre consumption | ✓ wound healing            |

If you don't get enough fluid each day you may become dehydrated. Signs of dehydration:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> dark urine (like apple juice) | <input type="checkbox"/> headache                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> urine with strong odor        | <input type="checkbox"/> fever                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dry mouth                     | <input type="checkbox"/> feeling tired or weak or dizzy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dry skin                      |   |

★ *Remember, even if you don't feel thirsty your body still needs fluids and feeling thirsty is actually a sign that you are already dehydrated!*

## What is considered fluid?

*Fluid – any food that is liquid at room temperature.*

- Water
- Juice (fruit or vegetable)
- Popsicles (one popsicle equals 4 fluid ounces or 120ml)
- Ice cream & sherbet (one scoop equals 4 fluid ounces or 120ml)
- Milk & milkshakes
- Soup
- Gelatin dessert (example Jello)
- Liquid nutrition drinks/ supplements
- Regular or decaf coffee, tea and soda
  - Caffeine has little effect on water loss and should be included in your total daily fluid intake. However, despite evidence that the water loss effect of caffeine is limited, it is still a stimulant drug and it is therefore recommended that fluid intake be from decaffeinated fluids most of the time.

## Tips on how to make sure you get enough fluid in a day:

- Schedule regular fluid intake (example: every 2 hours)
- Drink fluids before, during and after exercise
- Consume fluids with meals and snacks
- Choose a variety of fluids so that you don't get bored with the same beverage
- Eat lots of vegetables and fruit throughout the day as they have a larger water content.
- Remember if you are increasing your fibre intake you need to increase fluid intake as well, to prevent cramping or constipation
- Take a drink every time you stop for a break
- Choose water most often. Flavour water with your favourite fruit or vegetable to make it more appealing (e.g. lemons, limes, oranges, cucumbers)

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