

Getting Enough Fluids

Why are fluids important?

Fluids are important in our diets because our bodies are 60-70% water. We need water to help control our body temperature, digest food, carry nutrients and remove waste and cushion organs and joints. Everyday we lose water through our skin, kidneys, lungs and digestive tract and in order to keep our body working well, lost water must be replaced.

How much fluid should I consume?

As a general recommendation, females should drink about 9 cups of fluid a day and males should drink about 12 cups of fluid a day.

What is considered fluid?

Fluids include any food that is liquid at room temperature. These include:

- Water
- Juice (fruit or vegetable)
- Popsicles (one popsicle equals 4 fluid ounces or 120ml)
- Ice cream and sherbet (once scoop equals 4 fluid ounces or 120ml)
- Milk and 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 therefore caffeinated fluids should be included in your total daily fluid intake. However, despite the evidence that the water loss effect of caffeine is limited, caffeine is still a stimulant drug and it is therefore recommended that fluid intake be from decaffeinated fluids encouraged.

What happens if you don't get enough fluid each day?

If you don't get enough fluid on a daily basis, you may become dehydrated. Common symptoms of dehydration include dark urine (like apple juice), urine with strong odor, dry mouth, dry skin, headache, fever and feeling tired, weak or dizzy. If you are well hydrated, you will have lots of urine of lemon juice colour. Remember that even if you don't feel thirsty, your body still needs fluids and feeling thirsty is actually a sign that you are already slightly dehydrated.

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

- Plan regular fluid intake
- Consume fluids (as listed above) with meals and snacks Drink a variety of fluids so that you don't get bored with the same beverage
- Carry a water bottle/drink with you every where you go, even in the car
- Eat lots of vegetables and fruit throughout the day as they have a large water content
- Take a drink every time you stop for a break

When do I need to drink extra fluids?

There are times when your body needs extra fluids to function well. These include:

- During times when you have a fever, diarrhea, constipation or vomiting
- Before, during and after exercise
- During hot or humid weather
- In dry climates
- In cold climates
- At higher altitudes
- If you are young or elderly you may require extra fluids
- When you have wounds that are healing

When do I need to limit fluids?

If you have heart, liver, kidney or lung problems you may be instructed by your doctor or dietitian to limit fluid intake.

Check with you doctor or registered dietitian if you have any questions about extra fluids intake or limiting daily fluids.

Registered Dietitian: _____

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