

Water

Ever notice how lifeless a house plant looks when you forget to water it? Just a little water and it seems to perk back up. Water is just as essential for our bodies because it is in every cell, tissue, and organ in your body. That's why getting enough water every day is important for your health.

Healthy people meet their fluid needs by drinking when thirsty and drinking fluids with meals. But, if you're outside in hot weather for most of the day or doing vigorous physical activity, you'll need to make an effort to drink more fluids.

Where do I get the water I need?

Most of your water needs are met through the water and beverages you drink. You can get some fluid through the foods you eat. For example, broth soups and other foods that are 85% to 95% water such as celery, tomatoes, oranges, and melons.

What does water do in my body?

Water helps your body with the following:

- Keeps its temperature normal.
- Lubricates and cushions your joints.
- Protects your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues.
- Gets rid of wastes through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements.

Why do I need to drink enough water each day?

You need water to replace what your body loses through normal everyday functions. Of course, you lose water when you go to the bathroom or sweat, but you even lose small amounts of water when you exhale. You need to replace this lost water to prevent dehydration.



Your body also needs more water when you are—

- In hot climates.

- More physically active.
- Running a fever.
- Having diarrhea or vomiting.

To help you stay hydrated during prolonged physical activity or when it is hot outside, the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* recommend these two steps:

1. Drink fluid while doing the activity.
2. Drink several glasses of water or other fluid after the physical activity is completed.¹

Also, when you are participating in vigorous physical activity, it's important to drink before you even feel thirsty. Thirst is a signal that your body is on the way to dehydration. For more information, visit Fit Facts, Healthy Hydration from the American Council on Fitness. *(PDF-1.4Mb)

Some people may have fluid restrictions because of a health problem, such as kidney disease. If your healthcare provider has told you to restrict your fluid intake, be sure to follow that advice.

Tips for Increasing Your Fluid Intake by Drinking More Water



Under normal conditions, most people can drink enough fluids to meet their water needs. If you are outside in hot weather for most of the day or doing vigorous activity, you may need to increase your fluid intake.

If you think you're not getting enough water each day, the following tips may help:

- Carry a water bottle for easy access when you are at work or running errands.
- Freeze some freezer-safe water bottles. Take one with you for ice-cold water all day long.
- Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. This tip can also help with weight management. Substituting water for one 20-ounce sugar-sweetened soda will save you about 240 calories.
- Choose water instead of other beverages when eating out. Generally, you will save money and reduce calories.
- Give your water a little pizzazz by adding a wedge of lime or lemon. This may improve the taste, and you just might drink more water than you usually do.