



Your Body's Need for Water

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You can survive for weeks without food but only a few days without water. If you are in a hot or humid environment, it could be only a few hours. Your body is made up of 55%-75% water. Food is about 70% water. Water is extremely important for life and for your health.

In a study at Loma Linda University researchers found that people who drank five to 8 glasses of water daily were about half as likely to die of coronary heart disease as those who drank only two glasses or less per day. Coffee, soda, milk and other drinks did not show any significant heart benefits.

Dehydration can lead to elevated risk factors such as more concentrated blood. The thicker the blood the less effective it is in delivering oxygen to your brain and muscles which makes you more susceptible to blood clots. Water also helps regulate temperature. If you don't have enough water in your body it can't sweat to cool you. Water lubricates the joints and helps the digestive system. Water is responsible for actions involving energy production. If your kidneys don't have enough water available to them the liver must detoxify toxins, when your liver has to do this then other functions performed by the liver are less efficient, including food metabolism.

Water becomes even more important for you if you are working out. Water will help you recover from your workout. Water is also important for helping the body with fuel for exercise.

Did you know that not having enough water can actually increase your body fat? Sounds crazy but it is true. Water contributes to energy being stored alongside glycogen. If you don't drink enough water the extra glucose

remains in the blood stream until it reaches your liver and then is stored as body fat! Drink plenty of water so that the liver can effectively metabolize fat and so that the glucose that you eat is stored as glycogen for energy instead of fat.

How much water does a person need?

The gold standard has always been 8 glasses a day. Really this is just the bare minimum. If you are working out and sweating a lot your water needs will be higher. Water needs are also dependent on your body make up, body weight, and other factors considered. Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink some water, by that time you are already partly dehydrated! After a hard workout it is a good idea to drink 16 ozs of water for every lb of weight lost during sweating.

If you aren't use to drinking water it can be hard at first. A little lemon juice added to water adds some flavor and makes it easier to drink. If you don't like the way the water out of your tap tastes try distilled or bottled drinking water. Juices, teas, sodas, and milk might quench your thirst but they don't give you what your body really needs, pure water. Many actually increase your need for more water! Once you are use to drinking water you will find it easy to continue!

If you are exercising when it hot outside and do become dehydrated pure water may not be quite enough to replace lost electrolytes, such as sodium and potassium. Most sports drinks contain what your body needs but they also are loaded with sugar and or artificial sweeteners and colorings. Try making your own sports drinks using the recipes below:

Basic Electrolyte Sports Drink #1:

- 3 parts unsweetened fruit juice
- 1 part pure water
- Salt to taste

Electrolyte Sports Drink #2

- 1 x 8 oz cup of pure water
- 2 Tbsp fresh squeezed lemon juice
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp natural sweetener such as agave nectar, raw honey, or pure maple syrup

Black Hills Health and Education Center is a medical wellness retreat offering wellness programs and lifestyle change in a beautiful setting of the Black Hills in South Dakota. BHHEC is unique in that it offers a Christian based lifestyle program that includes everything from lodging and meals, physicals and comprehensive blood work, to daily treatments, exercise sessions with a personal trainer in the gym, classes presented by physicians, the Dietician, the Fitness Director, and other staff, cooking classes, sightseeing tours (Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Custer State Park Wild Animal Game preserve) and aquatics classes at the lovely swim center in Rapid City. Also included are counselling and stress-relief classes.