



Today we discuss... Dehydration

Dehydration is defined as excessive loss of body fluid. This is easily fixed by increasing fluid intake.

Not drinking enough water can lower your physical and mental performance, and lead to dehydration.

Water is needed for most body functions, including to: Maintain the health of every cell in the body, regulate body temperature through sweating, aid digestion and prevent constipation, moisturise the skin to maintain appearance and texture, carry nutrients and oxygen to cells, just to name a few.

The human body can last weeks without food, but only days without water. The body is made up of 55 to 75 percent water. As the body can't store water, we need fresh supplies

every day to make up for losses from the lungs, skin and urine.

The amount we need depends on our body size, metabolism, the weather, the food we eat and our activity levels.

Causes of Dehydration

- Not drinking enough water
- Increased sweating due to hot weather, exercise or fever
- Increased output of urine due to a hormone deficiency, diabetes, kidney disease or medications
- Diarrhoea or vomiting

Symptoms of dehydration

- Headaches
- Mood changes and slow responses
- Lethargy
- Dark-coloured urine
- Dry or cracked lips
- Weakness and Tiredness

Many people believe that drinking water causes fluid retention. In fact, the opposite is true. Drinking water helps the body rid itself of excess sodium, which results in less fluid retention.

The body will retain fluid if there is too little water in the cells. If the body receives enough water on a regular basis, there will be no need for it to conserve water and this will reduce fluid retention.

Fluids include fresh water and all other liquids like juice, soft drinks, coffee, tea, milk and soup. Fresh water is the best drink because it does not contain kilojoules and is best for hydrating the body.

Tap water in many cities also contains fluoride, which is good for teeth and bones. Bottled water does not usually have good levels of fluoride. Milk is an important fluid, especially for children, and is about 90 percent water. Tea can be an important source of fluid. Tea can help you meet your daily fluid recommendations, and is a source of antioxidants.

Fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice because it has more fibre and nutrients and less sugar. Consumption of sweet drinks, such as fruit juice, fruit drinks, sugary soft drinks and cordials, should be limited because they add calories without nutrient value. To increase your fluid intake, keep a bottle or glass of water handy on your desk or in your bag.

For more information on dehydration, visit:
http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Water_a_vital_nutrient

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