

Just the Facts...

Hydration!

Do you find yourself feeling tired, thirsty, or weak? These are classic signs of dehydration. Many people in the United States do not drink enough fluids every day.

- **Why do I need fluids?** Well, you can't live without them. In fact, 55-75% of your body weight is water. You need water to regulate body temperature, protect organs, remove waste, deliver nutrients to cells, and absorb vitamins and minerals. Since you lose water through sweat (2-4 cups/day), urine (4-6 cups/day), breathing (1.5 cups/day), and bowel movements (2/3 cup/day), it's important to stay on top of your fluid needs.
- **How much should I drink?** Generally, people need approximately 8-12 cups of fluid per day. You may need more or less depending on hot or cold temperatures, work and exercise, illness, and a high fiber diet. Eight to twelve cups may sound like a lot of fluid, but if you spread drinks throughout the day you will have no problem reaching your goal. Start out your day with a glass of water or juice with breakfast, carry a water bottle to class, and be sure to drink a beverage with each meal.
- **What should I drink?** Water is a great way to hydrate your body, whether it is bottled or from the tap. Add a twist of lemon, lime, or orange if your water needs a kick of flavor. Other options include fruit juices, sparkling or flavored waters, tea, and sports drinks. While some of these drinks will add calories to your daily intake, they also contribute vitamins and minerals. If you drink caloric beverages, watch your portion sizes.
- **What if I exercise?** Hydrate your body for optimal performance by drinking before, during, and after physical activity. For every hour of activity, drink an additional 1-3 cups of fluid. Sports drinks are not necessary for all athletes; they're most useful to endurance athletes who exercise for more than an hour at a time. No matter how you workout, keep plenty of fluids nearby.



- **What about alcoholic beverages?** Because alcohol acts as a diuretic, which causes fluid loss, alcoholic beverages do not count towards meeting your daily fluid needs. If you drink alcoholic beverages, alternate an alcoholic drink with a non-alcoholic drink. For example, if you have an alcoholic cocktail, next sip on sparkling water. This way, you'll be more likely to drink a moderate amount of alcohol and remain hydrated. Reminder: If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation (1 drink/day for women, 2 drinks/day for men) and consult your doctor if you have a medical condition.



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