

Water

Water is Life! It is the major component of our blood. About 70% of our total weight is water. The human body uses water for cleansing and cooling itself, and to maintain a proper chemical balance. We lose water when we perspire, when we breathe and through body waste. A loss of 20% of our body's water could even prove fatal.

Researchers found that athletes who drank water just to quench thirst did not have the endurance of those who drank as much water as they had lost. The athletes who drank more water did not become as fatigued and body temperature remained close to normal.

How much water should we drink? Forcing the body to work with limited amounts of fluid is like trying to wash a lot of dishes in just a cupful of water. We should drink enough water to keep the urine pale. That is usually 7 to 10 cups per day. Thirst is not an accurate gauge of your need for water.

Does it matter what we drink? Plain water is the best liquid for the body. Most beverages have sugar, which can slow digestion, contribute to weight gain, cause blood sugar swings and also requires extra water to metabolize. Colas contain phosphorus, which can deplete the body's calcium and lead to brittle bones. Nearly all beverages have artificial additives that may irritate the stomach or burden the kidneys or liver.

Caffeine is found in coffee, tea and many sodas. It can raise the blood pressure, blood sugar and blood fats. It stimulates the nervous system and can cause irritability, anxiety, tremors, chronic fatigue and insomnia. Caffeine and alcohol both are diuretics, and so deplete the body of water instead of hydrating the body.

What happens if I don't drink enough water? The kidneys have to work much harder to excrete toxic wastes, and may be damaged. Each cell in the body needs water to function well, so inadequate water intake can cause malfunctioning and disease. Fatigue and headaches are a common result of drinking too little water.

There are many uses for water outside the body as well. Regular bathing helps to cleanse away dirt and waste products from the skin. Cool water can help to reduce fever and warm water can bring warmth to chilled bodies. A warm bath may help if you are struggling to fall asleep. Trouble waking up in the morning? Try a cool ending to your shower, or a brisk rub of your skin with a washcloth dipped in cold water.

Water is of vital importance - use it abundantly for good health and vitality.