Water and Healthier Drinks

Benefits of Drinking Water

Getting enough water every day is important for your health. Drinking water can prevent dehydration, a condition that can cause unclear thinking, result in mood change, cause your body to overheat, and lead to constipation and kidney stones. Water has no calories, so it can also help with managing body weight and reducing calorie intake when substituted for drinks with calories, such as sweet tea or regular soda.

Water helps your body:

- Keep a normal temperature.
- Lubricate and cushion joints.
- Protect your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues.
- Get rid of wastes through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements.

Your body needs more water when you are:

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

Everyone should consume water from foods and beverages every day.

Although there is no recommendation for how much plain water everyone should drink daily, there are recommendations ⤢ for how much daily total water intake should come from a variety of beverages and foods.

Daily total water intake (fluid) is defined as the amount of water consumed from foods, plain drinking water, and other beverages. Daily water intake recommendations vary by age, sex, pregnancy status, and breastfeeding status. Most of your fluid needs are met through the water and other beverages you drink. You can get some fluids through the foods that you eat—especially foods with high water content, such as many fruits and vegetables. Drinking water is one good way of getting fluids as it has zero calories.

Tips to Drink More Water

- Carry a water bottle with you and refill it throughout the day.
- Freeze some freezer safe water bottles. Take one with you for ice-cold water all day long.
- Choose water over sugary drinks.
- Opt for water when eating out. You'll save money and reduce calories.
- Serve water during meals.
- Add a wedge of lime or lemon to your water. This can help improve the taste.
- Make sure your kids are getting enough water too. Learn more about drinking water in schools and early care and education settings 🔴 [PDF-3.68MB].

Healthier Drink Options

Of course, there are many other beverage options besides water, and many of these can be part of a healthy diet.

Low- or no- calorie beverages
Plain coffee or teas, sparkling water, seltzers, and flavored waters, are low-calorie choices that can be part of a healthy diet.

Drinks with calories and important nutrients
Low-fat or fat-free milk; unsweetened, fortified milk alternatives; or 100% fruit or vegetable juice contain important nutrients such as calcium, potassium, or vitamin D. These drinks should be enjoyed within recommended calorie limits.

Other Beverages

Sugary drinks: Regular sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks, sweetened waters, and sweetened coffee and tea beverages, contain calories but little nutritional value [PDF-30.6MB] . Learn how to rethink your drink.

Alcoholic drinks: If you choose to drink alcohol, do so in moderation.

Caffeinated drinks: Moderate caffeine consumption (up to 400 mg per day) can be a part of a healthy diet [PDF-30.6MB] . That's up to about 3 to 5 cups of plain coffee.

Drinks with sugar alternatives: Drinks that are labeled "sugar-free" or "diet" likely contain high-intensity sweeteners, such as sucralose, aspartame, or saccharine. According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, "replacing added sugars with high-intensity sweeteners may reduce calorie intake in the short-term...yet questions remain about their effectiveness as a long-term weight management strategy [PDF-30.6MB] ." Learn more about high-intensity sweeteners .

Sports drinks: These are flavored beverages that often contain carbohydrates, minerals, electrolytes, and sometimes vitamins . The average person should drink water, not sports drinks, to rehydrate.

Resources

- Water and Nutrition Basics
- Frequently Asked Questions about Drinking Water

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