

Water and Hydration

Water is a critical nutrient needed for health, growth, development and the balance of systems. Drinking water throughout the day keeps us energized and helps us not confuse thirst for hunger.

Health Benefits of Water and Hydration:

- Regulation of body temperature, blood pressure and heart rate, lubricates joints, protects organs and tissues
- Supports healthy skin, nails, and bowel function
- Helps you stay energized and focused
- May reduce headaches and kidney stones



The amount of water a person needs to maintain hydration depends on the individual. Factors such as exercise intensity, exercise duration, and air temperature all contribute to increased sweat loss which then requires more water to maintain hydration status.

Ways to Monitor Hydration Are:

- Urine color
 - Pale or lemonade colored urine is a sign of appropriate hydration.
 - Dark colored urine, the color of apple juice, indicates dehydration.
- Sweat loss
 - Change in body weight before and after exercise is used to estimate sweat loss.
 - Exercise is not the only activity that can promote sweat loss! Even just being in the hot sun all day can promote sweat loss and cause dehydration.
- Thirst
 - Being thirsty is one of the basic signs of dehydration. Instead of reaching for a soda, try to go for something that will better hydrate you such as water.
- Mood
 - Headaches, feeling lightheaded, tired, unable to focus, and irritability can all be signs of dehydration.

Dehydration

Dehydration is when you lose more fluid than you take in. It can occur in virtually every physical activity scenario. Although temperature plays a role in dehydration, it doesn't have to be hot to become dehydrated. Swimming in the water, such as a pool or lake, can cause a person to become dehydrated even if they are not visibly sweating and are not hot.

Alcohol and other diuretics such as caffeine promote fluid loss and dehydration even though they are a fluid. It is important to check your hydration status or know the warning signs of dehydration in order to monitor this.



Warning Signs of Dehydration Include:

- Flushed skin
- Premature fatigue
- Increased body temperature
- Faster breathing/ pulse rate
- Increased perception of effort
- Decreased exercise capacity
- Dizziness
- Increased weakness
- Labored breathing with exercise

Tips for Staying Hydrated:

- Keep a water bottle near you. Seeing the bottle will remind you to drink water
- Using a straw will help you drink faster.
- Flavor your water! You can use flavor packets or even fruits to give your water some more flavor.
- Eat foods with a high-water content such as fruits and vegetables!

