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# *The Importance of Keeping Hydrated*

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Water makes up nearly two-thirds of our body and is essential for us to function properly, we can't survive without it!

Water has a wide range of benefits for the body, it cleanses the body of toxins and waste products through urine, lubricates the joints, keeps your skin healthy, aids digestion, regulates temperature, boosts energy and it is believed that good hydration may also prevent the formation of kidney stones and lower the risk of heart attacks.

As a basic guide, most people need about 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid each day, which is about 8 to 10 glasses. You can get this from water and other drinks, such as milk and fruit juice. Water in food also counts, fruit and vegetables contain lots of water. Cucumber and lettuce have the highest water content of any food. Tomatoes are also packed with water. Just adding some salad to a meal can top your hydration levels up.

## Avoiding Dehydration

It is very important to keep your body's water content topped up, to avoid dehydration, which is a lack of water in your body. This can happen when you lose more water than usual. If you have a bout of vomiting or diarrhoea, large amounts of water will be lost. Other ways you can get dehydrated include sweating a lot and drinking too much alcohol. If you have diabetes, you're at risk of becoming dehydrated because you have high levels of glucose in your bloodstream. Your kidneys will try to get rid of the glucose by creating more urine, so your body becomes dehydrated from going to the toilet more frequently.

If you feel thirsty, chances are your body's telling you that you need to drink more. But the best indicators to establish if you are suffering from dehydration are the number of times you go to the toilet and the colour of your urine, it should be pale yellow. If you don't need to go often, you only pass a little urine each time and it's dark in colour, it's likely that you're dehydrated.

Dehydration can be really serious. If you have severe dehydration, your body stops getting rid of waste products and you may develop kidney failure.

## Treating Dehydration

If you think that you may be dehydrated, you need to rehydrate your body by drinking fluid. For mild dehydration, the best way to hydrate is by drinking water. That may be all you need. It's better to drink little and often rather than trying to drink a lot all in one go because this may make you vomit.

If you have more serious dehydration that's caused by diarrhoea or vomiting, you'll also be losing important salts and sugars from your body. A good way to replace these is with rehydration sachets, which you add to water.

If you have more severe dehydration in addition to the above mentioned signs you may also notice a weak or rapid pulse, low levels of consciousness and seizures. If there are signs of severe dehydration immediate medical advice must be sought.

So start your day with a glass of water and continue to drink water throughout the day to ensure that you consume the recommended amounts daily.



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