

August Wellness: Drink to Your Health

By Anne Praino



Drink Water.

We hear it all the time. Health experts, nutritionists, personal trainers, physicians—they all encourage us to drink water. While some of us have joined the movement, carefully selected our signature water bottle that stays in hand, in our purse or hangs out of our backpack, others have not been sold on the benefits or the importance of hydration.

According to University Health News, drinking water can “help you lose weight, think better, stay in a better mood, prevent disease and more.” Could there be a more compelling argument? Do

we just not trust that water does in fact DO all of that? Water makes up approximately 60 percent of our body and is vital for every function. The amount you need to drink each day varies depending on your age, activity level, and gender among other things. For example, if you increase your activity level, your daily water intake will need to increase accordingly. Athletes must pay particularly close attention as “very slight changes in body water may create performance issues in sports; as little as two percent decrease in body water can lead to dehydration and performance detriments in sports” (Hatfield). But we’re not just speaking of the Serena Williams’ or the Stephen Curry’s of the world. If you are engaged in any activity that makes you sweat such as cleaning the house or mowing the lawn, you must replace those lost fluids with extra hydration.

Eight glasses a day is the recommendation many of us are used to hearing. But the National Academy of Science recommends the following quantities for daily consumption: **Eleven and a half cups of fluid for women per day and fifteen and a half cups for men** (Canale). You will notice they said fluid, not water. There are several myths regarding what fluids actually hydrate the body. One common culprit is coffee. “There is no truth to the idea that coffee makes you dehydrated. The diuretic effect of the caffeine of soda and coffee is mild compared to the amount of fluid they contain,” says Larry Kenney, a spokesman for the American College of Sports Medicine. Also, many foods contribute to our fluid intake—fruits and vegetables, soups, yogurt, salads—these are all good sources of water. In fact, we get around 20 percent of our daily intake of fluids from foods we eat (Canale).

Staying well-hydrated will in fact contribute to your overall well-being. Water helps your body maintain a normal temperature, aids in the process of flushing wastes, maintains your energy level, and improves your complexion. It also boosts your immune system — preventing kidney stones, constipation, headaches and cramps (Canale). Not sold? Well if those physical ailments aren’t enough to convince you, studies using MRI scans have demonstrated that the brain shrinks when it becomes dehydrated. When water content in our cells diminish, they contract, making it harder for signals to pass through them. The brain then needs to consume more energy to move signals between cells which leads to constant tiredness and mental fatigue. This will result in inability to plan, bad mood, lower concentration, headaches and increased difficulty in performing tasks (Human Performance Laboratory). The good news is rehydrating can reverse all of these problems and restore the brain to its normal activity level.

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One final note—let’s set the example. Statistics show that more than fifty percent of all children and adolescents in the U.S. are not getting enough hydration. This trend could have an impact on the physical and cognitive health and emotional functioning of young people (Canale). “Young children lose fluids more quickly, so it’s important that you pay attention if your child is not feeling well during outdoor activities, especially in a warm month like August. Keep an eye out especially for chapped lips, cold or dry skin, drowsiness or an increased heart rate. Children should drink eight ounces of water for each year of their age according to the Children’s Hospital of Orange County in Irvine, CA. After age eight, kids can continue to drink sixty-four ounces per day (Groundwater).

>> Join us here at Tycor for our “Drink Up Challenge”! We are going to shoot for a daily water intake of 32 ounces for the entire month of August. Some say it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit. Let’s make staying hydrated one of ours!

Works Cited

<https://universityhealthnews.com/tag/how-much-water-to-drink/>

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