



Heart-Healthy Tips: Meeting Your Daily Water Needs

Ever notice how lifeless a house plant looks when you forget to water it? Just a little water and it seems to perk back up. Water is just as essential for our bodies and overall health because it is in every cell, tissue, and organ in your body.

Healthy people meet their fluid intake needs by drinking when thirsty and drinking fluids with meals. You need water to replace what your body loses through normal everyday functions, such as going to the bathroom, sweating, or even exhaling. If you're outside in hot weather for most of the day or doing vigorous physical activity, you need to make an effort to drink even more.

These tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Nutrition for Everyone” web site will help you stay hydrated in the hot summer months.

Where do I get the water I need?

Most of your water needs are met through the water and beverages you drink. You can get some fluid through the foods you eat. For example, broth soups and celery, tomatoes, oranges, and melons are 85 to 95 percent water.

What does water do in my body?

Water helps your body with the following:

- ▶ Keeps its temperature normal.
- ▶ Lubricates and cushions your joints.
- ▶ Protects your spinal cord and other sensitive tissues.
- ▶ Gets rid of wastes through urination, perspiration, and bowel movements.

Why do I need to drink enough water each day?

You need water to replace what your body loses through normal everyday functions. Of course, you lose water when you go to the bathroom or sweat, but you even lose small amounts of water when you exhale. You need to replace this lost water to prevent dehydration.

When should I drink more water than usual?

- ▶ In hot climates
- ▶ When you are exercising
- ▶ When you are running a fever
- ▶ If you have diarrhea or are vomiting

Find more health and wellness tips and resources for first responders at www.healthy-firefighter.org.

How can I increase my fluid intake?

- ▶ Carry a water bottle for easy access when you are at work or running errands.
- ▶ Freeze some freezer-safe water bottles. Take one with you for ice-cold water all day long.
- ▶ Choose water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. This tip can also help with weight management. Substituting water for one 20-ounce sugar-sweetened soda will save you about 240 calories.
- ▶ Choose water instead of other beverages when eating out. Generally, you will save money and reduce calories.
- ▶ Give your water a little pizzazz by adding a wedge of lime or lemon. This may improve the taste, and you just might drink more water than you usually do.

Some people may have fluid restrictions because of a health problem, such as kidney disease. If your healthcare provider has told you to restrict your fluid intake, be sure to follow that advice.

Do sugar-sweetened beverages count?

Although beverages that are sweetened with sugars do provide water, they usually have more calories than unsweetened beverages. To help with weight control, you should consume beverages and foods that don't have added sugars. Examples of beverages with added sugars are fruit drinks, some sports drinks, and non-diet sodas.

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Rethink Your Drink” [web site](#) for more information about the calories in beverages and how you can make better drink choices to reduce your calorie intake. For more tips on nutrition and fitness, visit the Heart-Healthy Firefighter Program web site at www.healthy-firefighter.org.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention