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The Importance of Hydration

Water is essential for a lifetime of optimal health. Approximately 60% of a young adult's weight is water. As we age this decreases to 50%. Staying hydrated helps us stay healthy as we age.

What else can drinking water or staying hydrated do for us?

- Moisten the tissues in the eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Protect the body organs and tissues.
- Help prevent constipation and dissolve minerals and other nutrients to make them accessible to the body.
- Regulate body temperature, lubricate joints and lessen the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products. Your kidneys do not function properly without adequate water intake.
- Carry nutrients and oxygen to cells

Our bodies need water like a car needs oil. If your car doesn't have oil, what happens to the engine? Just like it is important to put the right kind of oil in an engine, we need to put the right kind of water in our bodies as well. It takes a liter of water to flush out a cup of coffee and it takes a gallon to flush a can of soda.

How much water do we need? You should drink one-half your body weight in water (ounces). So if you weigh 130 pounds, you need to drink 65 ounces of water a day, or about eight medium glasses.

During the summer months we tend to drink more water than usual because we sweat a lot. We need to drink extra in hot weather because a lot is lost, but we must remember to drink water all winter long to protect our organs and to keep going strong. Drinking water will also increase your energy by boosting your metabolism. It also facilitates weight loss.

Dehydration in the elderly is common and can be life-threatening. Falls are often a result of the dizziness that results from dehydration. The thirst stimulus decreases with age as does the total water content of our bodies. Seniors should make themselves drink water or non-caffeinated beverages throughout the day. Don't wait to get thirsty.

Those taking blood pressure medicines or heart medication should talk to their doctors about how much water they should consume per day. As always, one size, or in this case amount, doesn't fit all.

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