



Hydration & Nutrition

Dehydration occurs when the amount of water leaving the body is greater than the amount being put in. The body must have adequate amounts of fluid to perform nearly all functions needed to maintain good health. Drinking inadequate amounts of fluid or becoming dehydrated can lead to confusion, increased risk for falls, fatigue, constipation, urinary tract infections (UTI), and weight loss.

Consuming adequate amounts of fluid can help to prevent dehydration as well as its side effects. Water is a great source of fluid, but is not the only way to maintain hydration, fluid can come from various sources:

Fluids

- Fluids such as juice, milk, and oral supplements improve hydration.
- Drinks with caffeine, such as coffee and tea, can improve hydration, especially for people who consume them regularly.



Foods

- Fruits and vegetables are naturally high in water, and eating them frequently can help maintain hydration.
- Foods made with water contribute to hydration. These include foods like soup, oatmeal and/or cream of wheat made with water, and instant mashed potatoes.
- Foods that turn into a liquid at room temperature count as liquid as well, such as ice cream, popsicles, and gelatin.

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How much fluid do I need?

On average, men need about 3 liters (about 13 cups) of fluid a day and women need about 2 ½ liters (about 10½ cups). This sounds like a lot, however it includes fluid from water, other beverages (like coffee and tea), and food (like fruits and vegetables).

Some individuals have higher fluid needs than others. Some reasons why one may need more fluid include:

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Infection
- Wounds
- Certain medications
- Excessive sweating
- Certain medical conditions

It's important to be proactive. That is, consume plenty of fluid on a regular basis. If you wait to drink until you feel thirsty, you may already be dehydrated!

Check with a dietitian or doctor for your specific dietary needs.

Additional Notes: