

WATER



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Years ago, you rarely saw people carrying water around with them throughout the day, but today it's common. Water bottles could almost be considered a fashion accessory coming in various sizes, colors and shapes. As many already know, the body is made up of about 60% water. Every organ, tissue and cell in your body needs water to function properly.

Just to name a few, water is needed by your body to:

- Carry nutrients and oxygen to your working muscles; it also carries lactic acid and carbon dioxide out of muscles
- Regulate your body temperature by sweating; on these hot days water absorbs the heat from your muscles and dissipates it through sweat to lower your body temperature
- Help with digestion
- Cushion and lubricate joints

How much fluid does the body need each day?

Each person is different and fluid needs will depend on how active you are, where you live, and your overall health. You can estimate you will get about 20% of the fluids you need from what you eat and the rest should come from what you drink. General fluid recommendations are for men to drink about 13-15 cups of fluid a day and women require about 9-11 cups daily. Sports drinks are recommended if you have intense activity such as running for an hour or more; otherwise water is your best drink of choice and the electrolytes can easily be restored by eating a balanced diet.

How do you know if you are getting enough fluid?

One of the best ways is to look at the color of your urine (unless you are taking supplements that can change the color of urine). The darker the color of your urine typically the less hydrated you are. If your urine is light-colored and you have good urine output every 2-4 hours chances are you are drinking adequate fluid.

Signs of dehydration are dry mouth, headache, dizziness, muscle cramps, confusion, feeling tired and lethargic. The elderly have a higher risk for dehydration because they don't feel or recognize thirst as well. Dehydration can be serious if not corrected right away, and can even lead to death. Be mindful of how much and how often you are drinking fluids during activity and/or high temperatures – at work or at play.

Bottled Water

Americans drink more than two billion gallons of bottled water each year. Now there are so many different types of water to choose from as well. Here are what some of the different types of water mean...

Spring water is essentially the same thing as artesian, well or ground water. It generally contains natural minerals. There are industry regulations in place to remove lead and other contaminants out of your drinking water. You can purchase water filtration systems for your home if you have concerns about the quality of your water.

Purified water is basically well or ground water that has had all impurities reduced to no more than 10 parts per million (ppm) in a treatment facility. The process removes bacteria, dissolved solids, contaminants such as chemicals and pathogens - but not microbes.

Alkaline water has a higher pH than regular water. It has been touted to neutralize acid in the body and prevent some forms of cancer, although there is little scientific evidence to support these claims or show that alkaline water will significantly change the pH of your blood.

Mineral water usually contains calcium, magnesium and sulfur. The composition of mineral water can vary depending on company that bottles it. This water is still filtered to remove toxins and carbon dioxide. Some people feel mineral water has a better or fuller flavor because of the minerals present. If you don't want to spend the extra money for mineral water these minerals can also be consumed from eating a balanced diet.

Distilled water is a pure form of water because all the minerals and salt are removed through reverse osmosis. Drinking this water may cause a fast loss of sodium, potassium, chloride and magnesium if you aren't getting enough in your diet.

Sparkling water is basically carbonated water using any of the above kinds of water with the addition of carbon dioxide.