

Water is essential for all living creatures and plant life, and it is crucial for your good health as well. Are you drinking enough water? *As we enter the warmer weather and are more active outdoors doing gardening, playing Pickleball, golf, walking or hiking; it is extremely important to be well hydrated.*

Every cell, tissue, and organ in your body needs water to work properly. For example, water does this:

- Gets rid of body wastes
- Keeps your temperature normal
- Lubricates and cushions joints
- Protects sensitive tissues

Lack of water can lead to dehydration, which occurs when you don't have enough water in your body to carry out normal functions. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired.

So, living in a temperate climate how much fluid does the average, healthy, adult need? The U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine determined that an adequate daily intake is **eight glasses of water a day**. That's easy to remember, and it's a reasonable goal.

Most healthy people can stay hydrated by drinking water and other fluids whenever they feel thirsty. For some people, fewer than eight glasses a day might be enough, and others might need more. Others may have conditions that might require increased fluid intake.

You might need to modify your total fluid intake based on several factors:

- **Exercise.** If you do any activity that makes you sweat, you need to drink extra water to cover the fluid loss. It's important to drink water before, during, and after a workout.
- **Environment.** Hot, humid, weather or high altitudes can make you sweat and require additional fluid.

How do you recognize and treat someone with heat exhaustion or heat stroke?

Heat *exhaustion* can present with dizziness, headache, nausea, weakness, unsteady gait, muscle cramps and fatigue. Heat *stroke's* primary symptoms include a change in mental status such as confusion, delirium, combativeness, seizures, loss of consciousness, and a core body temperature above 104.

- Stay with the person.
- Remove the person from the hot area and give liquids to drink if he or she is alert.
- Remove unnecessary clothing, including shoes and socks.
- Cool the person with cold compresses; wash the person's head, face, and neck with cool water.
- If the person doesn't respond to these interventions, call 911.

Take this recommendation: If you feel overheated or someone has concerns that you are overheated. Drink a glass of water without delay. You might save yourself a trip to the emergency room.

Overall health. Your body loses fluids when you have a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Drink more water, or follow a doctor's recommendation to drink oral rehydration solutions.