

NATURAL HEALTH SERVICES

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Water: The Ultimate Health Food

By Keith Post, ND

Your body is approximately 75% water. Pure water intake is required for every function in the body, including cellular cleansing, detoxification, maintaining correct electrolyte balance, cooling (thermoregulation), replenishing digestive juices, assimilation of nutrients, elimination and other metabolic functions. It also prevents cellular dehydration, which is one of the keynotes of aging.

The proper intake of water, depending on your weight, is usually eight or more 8-ounce glasses per day and more if you are engaging in strenuous physical activities. This will ensure that your body functions effortlessly, smoothly and with maximum efficiency.

Here is a formula to determine your optimal intake. Take your total body weight in pounds and divide it by two. That number is approximately the minimum number of ounces per day that you should consume. Finally, divide that number by eight to see how many cups per day is best for you.

The Optimal Protocol:

Drink 8 ounces of warm, lukewarm or room temperature water about ½-hour before each meal. Drink very little with the actual meals. Then, drink another eight ounces or more of warm, lukewarm or room temperature water approximately 1-½ hours after each meal.

Explanation of the Optimal Protocol:

By drinking water 30 minutes before each meal, the body will have enough water for the salivary glands to create sufficient saliva, which contains amylase, a very important carbohydrate-digesting enzyme. At the same time, the stomach lining, which secretes hydrochloric acid and pepsin, a protein-digesting enzyme, will also be replenished.

Then, during your meal, it is important to chew all of your food well, as that ensures maximum efficiency of the enzymatic action necessary for good digestion to occur. Also, it is wise to minimize your water intake during the actual meal, as this tends to dilute your digestive enzymes, making them less effective. Soups and stews are considered food rather than drink here, but I would opt for the cup rather than the bowl size if you are planning on eating a full meal besides.

When have you had enough to eat? When you start wondering if you've eaten enough, you probably have, so stop then. There is never a good reason to eat to maximum capacity, as the stomach should always have sufficient room to do its churning and mixing functions, ensuring complete digestion.

The desire to drink water again 1-1/2 hours after the meal is normal and is triggered by the need to replace the recently depleted salivary, stomach, pancreatic and gallbladder secretions. Ample water intake at this time also ensures that the body will leave some of the water in the colon, so that the stool will always remain soft enough to pass smoothly and easily.

The modern cooked diet is often lacking in moisture, so drinking water before and after meals is especially important for us today. In contrast, herbivores (grazing animals) have frequent stools throughout their waking hours due to the high water and fiber content of their food. So, if you continue to have problems with constipation after following the other suggestions given here, it would be wise to increase your vegetable and fruit intake.

As you adopt this pattern of water drinking, you will notice that you have better digestion, more energy, a more relaxed attitude and that the complexion of your skin improves.

The following information was derived from the booklet Healthy Water, by Martin Fox, Ph.D., Healthy Water Research, 1990, Rev. 1998.
<http://www.healthywater.com>

Chlorination Facts

- Drinking chlorinated drinking water has been shown to eventually lead to atherosclerosis (“hardening of the arteries”), premature senility and other symptoms of aging in studies using chickens.
- During the chlorination process, chlorine combines with trace amounts of vegetable matter to form trihalomethanes (THM's) or haloforms, many of which are carcinogenic.
- In a 1976 study, 31 of 112 different municipal water systems in the U.S. exceeded the limits for THMs established by the EPA.
- In humans, it takes between ten and twenty years of steady use for symptoms of atherosclerosis or cancer to become evident.
- Drinking water contaminants, many of which are carcinogenic or potentially carcinogenic, are common. The EPA only monitors a certain number of these.
- According to one study, “...97 carcinogens and suspected carcinogens, 82 mutagens and suspected mutagens, 28 acute and chronic toxic contaminants and 23 tumor promoters have been detected in U.S. drinking water since 1974....”
- Some cities in the U.S. are starting to use aeration, carbon filtration, ultraviolet light and ozone as safe alternatives to chemical disinfectants, but they are still a small minority.
- Drinking mineralized or “hard” water, which is high in calcium and magnesium, has been found to protect against some of the negative effects of drinking chlorinated water. Hard water protects by tying up harmful agents and thereby lowering their absorption.
- Also, the body will selectively absorb the essential minerals, while excreting the non-essential and potentially harmful metallic elements.
- In general, it is not healthy to drink de-mineralized (“soft”) or distilled water. The essential minerals in hard drinking water are beneficial and are often more easily absorbed than minerals from food.

Fluoride Facts

- Fluoride has been documented to have mutagenic and chromosomal effects. It can cause birth defects, notably Down's Syndrome.
- Fluoride can cause a wide range of allergic reactions, including fatigue, headaches, diarrhea and urinary tract infections.
- Fluoride intake has been proven to interfere with the metabolism of calcium, magnesium, manganese and Vitamin C.
- No scientific research has ever supported the contention that fluoride significantly reduces tooth decay.
- Tooth decay has been proven to be a result of malnutrition and poor dietary habits, notably the over consumption of sugar and refined foods.
- Cities having naturally "hard" water, meaning that their water supply is naturally rich in macrominerals such as calcium and magnesium, do have lower levels of dental cavities. Also, experiments show that when the water is hard, less fluoride is absorbed through the intestinal walls.
- The "softer" the water, the more easily absorption of fluoride takes place through the intestinal walls.
- Only 10% of the population in British Columbia drink fluoridated water, making them the least fluoridated province, yet their tooth decay rate is the lowest in Canada.
- Fluoridation can cause fluorosis of the teeth and the skeleton. It does this by gradually replacing naturally hard bone composed of mainly calcium phosphate with a gradually increasing percentage of calcium fluoride, which is softer and more brittle.
- Four studies in JAMA since 1990 have established a link between fluoridation and hip fractures.
- Worldwide, there is very little fluoridation! In fact, many civilized countries have discontinued fluoridation, including Germany, Spain, France and Sweden, all of which have a healthier life expectancy score than the USA. (We are currently ranked 24th in the world).
- Dr. Dean Burk, former researcher with the National Cancer Institute, claims "one tenth of all cancer deaths in this country can be shown to be linked to fluoridation of public drinking water."
- Most cities that fluoridate purchase sodium fluoride, which is a by-product (some would say "waste product") left over from the production of aluminum.

Keith Post, ND is a local naturopathic physician specializing in clinical nutrition and bodywork therapies. You may read more about his practice at <http://naturalhealthservices.info>.