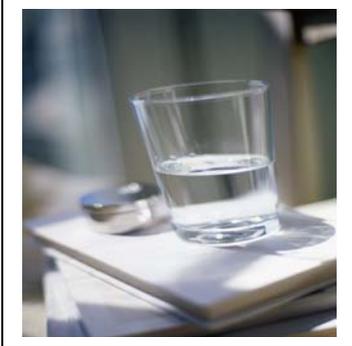


Live Healthy Georgia- Seniors Taking Charge



October 2008 Newsletter

Fluids and Hydration

By Jessica Burge, BS



Now that summertime is over and fall has begun, bringing with it cooler weather and autumn leaves, it is still as important as ever to make sure you're drinking enough fluids. Dehydration, or the lack of fluid in the body, is a common problem for seniors. Did you know that a person's thirst sensation diminishes with age? This lack of thirst causes you to drink fewer fluids and increases your risk for dehydration. It has been estimated that as many as 1 in 3 older adults may not be drinking enough water.

Water is important for our bodies to function properly, and since this nutrient can not be stored, it is critical that we replace it daily. Fluids may be lost as a result of inadequate intake or from normal body functions, such as sweating. Humid climates, like ours in Georgia, can cause you to perspire more than climates with drier air.

Some medications and laxatives can also increase fluid loss.

So how much should you drink per day? An appropriate guideline for intake is 6 to 8 glasses per day. However, actual needs will vary according to a person's body size, environment, and activity level. Requirements may also vary greatly from one day to the next, depending on your activities. For example, your fluid need would be greater on a day when you are outside gardening, opposed to a day spent inside reading a book or watching television. Beverages like milk, juice, coffee, tea, and water all count toward your daily fluid intake. Also, remember that foods contain fluids. Items such as fruits, vegetables, soups, gelatin, and pudding all contain a high percentage of water.



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When these foods are eaten regularly, they can contribute 2 to 3 glasses of fluid. Caffeinated beverages like soft drinks are not an ideal source of fluid since they have a diuretic effect, which actually causes you to lose water.

How do you know whether you are getting enough to drink throughout the day? Symptoms of dehydration include decreased urination, headache, weight loss, increased heart rate, decreased blood pressure, and constipation. But don't wait until you feel thirsty to have a beverage; at this point it is likely that you are already dehydrated.

Tips for Staying Hydrated

1. Drink fluids both between meals and during meals to ensure adequate intake throughout the day.
2. Keep a variety of drinks on hand so you don't get tired of the same item.
3. Be mindful of your intake, especially on days of increased activity, to make sure you are getting enough to drink.
4. Watch for the signs of dehydration.

For more information see: Preventing dehydration in older adults. Available at <http://www.rd411.com/article.php?ID=213> and USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. *Nutrition Insights: More Than One in Three Older Adults May Not Drink Enough Water*. September, 2002. Available at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publication/NutritionInsights/Insight27.pdf>. Or <http://www.livewellagewell.info>

Try this easy cider recipe for a hot drink to keep you cozy and in the fall spirit!

Hot Spiced Apple Cider

- 1 cup apple cider
- 2 cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice

Heat apple cider on the stove. Add remaining ingredients. Allow the mixture to simmer for fifteen minutes or more. Serve in mugs and enjoy!

*Makes 2 servings.

