



# Live Healthy Georgia— Seniors Taking Charge Hydration



April 2011 Newsletter  
By Lauren Badger, BS

While you are enjoying the rising temperatures and blossoming trees, do not forget to hydrate this spring!

## **Why is hydration important?**

Water helps us maintain our body temperature. It also moistens tissues, including the mouth, eyes, and nose. Water lubricates our joints and protects our organs. It helps prevent constipation and helps the kidneys and liver flush out our body's waste products. Water helps the body use minerals and other nutrients, and it also carries oxygen to the cells.

## **How many fluids do I need each day?**

For males, if you are aged 19-70 years, you need approximately 13 cups, and if you are over 70 years, you need approximately 9½ cups. For females, if you are aged 19-70 years, you need approximately 9 cups, and if you are over 70 years, 8½ cups.

## **Where can I get my fluids?**

Beverages make up most of fluid consumption, but foods actually contribute. Water is the best option because it has no calories, is inexpensive, and is widely available.

Both milk and juice are high in water. Tea, coffee, and soda can contribute to your fluid intake but should be consumed in moderation. Many fruits and vegetables have a high percentage of water. When you select your fluids, watch out for excessive sugar or salt content!

## **What is dehydration?**

Dehydration occurs when your body secretes more water than it takes in. It can occur if you do not drink enough water; have diarrhea, vomiting, a fever, excessive sweating, increased urination, or severe burns; or are taking certain medications. Signs of dehydration can range from mild or moderate (such as dry mouth, thirst, decreased urination, muscle weakness, headache, and dizziness) to severe (irritability, confusion, lack of sweat, increased urination, low blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, or fever). You should not wait until you feel thirsty to consume fluids, because you can be slightly dehydrated by the time you feel thirsty! One indicator of adequate hydration is your urine, which should be colorless or slightly yellow.

## What puts me at risk of dehydration?

Older adults, infants and children, individuals with chronic diseases (such as diabetes, kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, and alcoholism) or a cold or sore throat, endurance athletes, and those living at high altitudes are at increased risk.

## When should I see my doctor?

Dehydration can lead to heat injury, swelling of the brain, seizures, shock, and kidney failure, so it is important to seek treatment. If you have had severe diarrhea, vomiting bouts, or feel irritable or disoriented, you should see your doctor. In addition, if you are planning to do heavy physical activity and are on blood pressure medication, you should see your doctor.

## What are some ways I can remember to drink more water?

- Try flavored waters
- Drink a glass of water with and between each meal
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise
- Carry a water bottle around with you so that you always have access
- Trade sparkling water for alcoholic drinks at social events

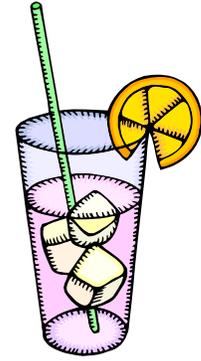
## Is it possible to drink too much water?

Yes, it is possible, although it is not common. If you are a healthy adult who eats an average American diet, drinking too much water is rare.

Try the recipe at right to increase your fluid intake!

## Cranberry Lemonade

Serves: 12



## Ingredients

9 cups water  
2 cups fresh lemon juice  
1 cup 100% cranberry juice, chilled  
2 cups Splenda (or other sugar substitute—follow the substitution on the package for 2 cups sugar)

## Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a large pitcher and stir.
2. Garnish with mint leaves and orange or lemon slices (optional).
3. Serve over ice.
4. Enjoy!

**Nutrition Facts (per serving):** Calories: 22, Total Fat: 0 g, Sodium: 9 mg, Total Carbohydrates: 12.3 g (Sugars: 3.9 g), Protein: 0 g, Vitamin C: 31%

Recipe adapted from:

<http://www.food.com/recipe/splenda-pink-lemonade-196786>

## References:

\*Biochemical, Physiological & Molecular Aspects of Human Nutrition. 2nd edition. by Martha H Stipanuk. 2006. Elsevier Inc. St Louis, MO.

\*Mayo Clinic. Dehydration. 2009. Internet: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/dehydration/DS00561> (Accessed August 23, 2010).

\*Mayo Clinic. Nutrition and Healthy Eating. Water: How much should you drink every day? 2010. Internet: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/water/NU00283> (Accessed August 23 2010).

\*National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine. Food and Nutrition Board. Dietary reference intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate. Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2000.