

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Water: Keep it Flowing

Our bodies are approximately 55% - 75% water weight. Children have an even higher percentage. Individuals may vary in the amount of water that makes up their bodies and all of us need to be keeping our bodies hydrated.

The summer heat seems to drain water from our bodies. When we are out in the heat, it is essential to reduce the risk of dehydration. Water is lost through perspiration, urine and feces and through our breath as we exhale. The key to prevent dehydration is to take more water into our body than we are losing.

- ✓ Water plays a key role in keeping our bodies functioning.
- ✓ Blood is mostly water and transports oxygen, nutrients, hormones and enzymes and carries away waste products for removal from our bodies.
- ✓ Our joints use water to reduce friction.
- ✓ Organs need water to function efficiently.
- ✓ Digestion breaks down food through saliva and keeps our digestive track functioning to remove waste.
- ✓ The brain uses water and when dehydrated we may become fatigued, have symptoms such as dizziness, headache, confusion, or disorientation.
- ✓ Muscles become weakened when water is removed.
- ✓ When the kidneys are dehydrated or over worked to remove waste from our bodies they can shut down or develop kidney stones or urinary tract infections.
- ✓ Water also plays an important part in keeping us cool and preventing overheating.

Let's face it we need water to function efficiently. When we become dehydrated our bodies do not work efficiently and slowly shut down as we become overheated and dehydrated and it could lead to death.

Some common signs of dehydration include:

- Thirst
- Fatigue, weakness and loss of appetite
- Dry mouth, flushed skin, headache reduced urine output, impatience and apathy
- Difficulty concentrating, irritability and sleepiness, increased breathing and pulse rate which can lead to heat exhaustion

- Dizziness, muscle spasms, loss of balance, swollen tongue, delirium, exhaustion, and collapse which can lead to heat stroke
- Poor blood circulation, failing kidney function which can lead to death.

How much should we drink each day? The amount needed has many variables based on your lifestyle, where you live and your activity levels. Men should have about 125 ounces or just under 16 cups a day. Women should drink about 91 ounces or just under 12 cups a day. To put that into perspective 1 cup is 8 ounces so 16 cups equal a gallon and 12 cups equals $\frac{3}{4}$ of a gallon.

The easiest way to determine if you are dehydrated is to check the color of your urine. A dark urine that is of a limited amount means you should drink more. A light urine with a good flow means you have a normal water balance.

When dehydrated the best option is plain water, milk or fruits and vegetables with high water content such as melons or tomatoes. Energy drinks, fruit drinks, and carbonated beverages usually contain higher levels of sugar and should be avoided. Sports drinks are usually not needed for most activities less than one hour. Longer physical activity and they help replace water lost and provide a source of carbohydrates and electrolytes.

Salt tablets are not recommended unless prescribed by a doctor. Salt draws water to it so you are actually drawing water out of the body to the stomach. In this instance salt tablets may actually make dehydration worse and cause stress to the body.

Water helps cool the body from the inside out. A good reminder is to drink water when we move from one activity to the next or each hour throughout the day. Try to stay out of the heat and drink lots of water daily to replenish your body.

Information for this press release was taken from the publication: Liquid Assets: The Value of Fluids to Your Health Revised by Priscilla Brenes, Ph.D., Nutrition Specialist, K-State Research and Extension. Original author Barbara Ames, retired agent Wildcat District. [MF2739 Liquid Assets: The Value of Fluids to Your Health, Fact Sheet \(ksu.edu\)](#)

For more information about canning, nutrition, food safety or health, or if you would like a specific program in your area, contact Holly Miner at haminer@ksu.edu or call 620-331-2690.

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