

Are You DEHYDRATED?

By Laura Childers

Are you drinking enough water? If not, you may be suffering more effects than you realize. A recent study cited in *The Journal of Nutrition* showed that even mild dehydration can dampen moods, increase fatigue, and lead to headaches. Every cell, tissue and organ in your body needs water to function well, so drink up!

How to Know if You're Dehydrated:

Besides thirst, there are a couple of telltale ways to identify if you're dehydrated.

- **Toilet Check:** If your urine is dark yellow or amber, you may be dehydrated. Some experts say that when hydrated your urine should be the color of lemonade.

- **Sweat Rate:** If you exercise or work out regularly, find out if you're getting enough water by calculating your sweat rate. Weigh yourself in kilograms with as little clothing as possible (1 lb.=0.45 kilograms), then exercise at an intensity that causes you to sweat. Don't drink anything. After 30 minutes, weigh yourself again. Subtract your new weight in kilograms from your old weight, and then double that number. That is roughly how many liters per hour you should drink.

Other signs of dehydration include sluggishness, light-headedness, and dry skin and lips.

Tips for getting your H₂O:

1 Forget eight glasses. Your hydration needs will depend on your body make-up and activity levels. It's true: six to eight cups is the average recommendation, but it's important for everyone to learn their individual needs, particularly those who live an active lifestyle.

2 Stick to H₂O. Other types of drinks can keep you hydrated, but they often add unnecessary calories and sugars. Water is calorie-free, inexpensive and readily available.

3 Eat your water. You can also stay hydrated by eating fruits and vegetables, such as watermelon, cucumber, tomatoes, celery, oranges, and lettuce. Several of these types of produce are made of up to 85-90% water.

4 Get an app. Featured on CBS, "Water Your Body" (\$1, iTunes App Store) helps you track your daily water consumption according to your individual needs.

5 Get in a routine. If you're one of those people who forgets to drink, get in the habit of drinking a certain amount before or after meals, or when you wake up or go to bed.



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It Needs

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