

The Importance of Hydration



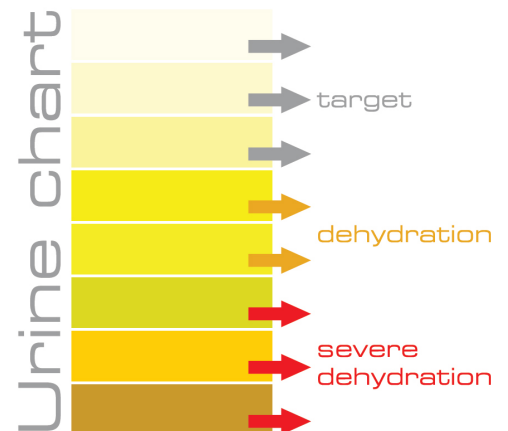
Did you know that your body doesn't realize it is thirsty until you have lost 1-2% of your body weight in fluid?

The human body is made up of 60% water, on average. Water is essential in helping the body regulate temperature and other bodily functions required to live. A few of the specific functions of water in the body include carrying nutrients to cells, lubricating joints, protecting body organs and tissues, and flushing wastes. The body loses water by breathing, sweating, and waste excretion, so fluid replacement is necessary in order to keeping your body running!

Dehydration is defined as not having enough water in your body. Often, dehydration is measured by a percent change in body mass directly caused by a change in the body's water weight. A decrease in body mass by 1-4% indicates moderate to severe dehydration. Effects of moderate to severe dehydration include:

1. Impaired cognitive function
2. Impaired short term memory
3. Decrease in athletic performance
4. Increase in core body temperature
5. Increase in heart rate

A common way to detect dehydration is by thirst, but being thirsty means that you are already dehydrated. A urine chart is an effective tool that can be used to detect dehydration. Dark, smelly urine indicates dehydration, whereas light, straw colored urine indicates a state of hydration.



Hydration requirements are dependent on age, sex, activity level, genetics, and the environment. However, the Dieticians of Canada Guidelines indicate that **adult males should drink 3 L (12 cups) and adult women drink 2.5 L (9 cups) of fluid daily.**

Tips on getting more fluid

1. Carry a water bottle with you when you leave the house.
2. Drink water right when you wake up in the morning, and with every meal.
3. Coffee and tea are not dehydrating! They are a good alternative to water, but caffeine consumption should be monitored.