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### **Water the Forgotten Nutrient**

Water is a vital part of your daily nutrient needs. It acts as your body's transportation system. Water is a lubricant, helps with digestion, regulates body temperature and gives balance between nutrients absorbed by the body and waste removal.

The recommended amount of water from one person to another varies. Most physicians will say 8 to 12 glasses a day. A lot depends on activity levels, state of health, body mass and age to name a few variables. One key that you can monitor is the color of urine output. Dark urine coloration indicates that you need to drink more water. Clear urination is preferred.

The sources of water can be both water itself as well as food. Lettuce, celery and other crisp vegetables are 90 percent made up of water. Even grain sources contain water. Beverages that contain caffeine are not sources of water. Caffeine acts as a dehydrator and depletes the body of water. Juice, milk and plain water are the best choices for water intake.

Water acts as a temperature regulator. When you are sick, water intake needs monitoring so that you do not dehydrate. Infants when they are sick may need extra electrolytes and the best way to increase this in a balanced way is to use a product that replaces electrolytes. This is also true of adults.

Athletes also need to be mindful of water intake. Water is the key element that helps with temperature regulation. In athletes, this is vital. Sports drinks are helpful after an athletic event. Sports drinks contain 4 to 8 percent glucose which helps to maximize glycogen and glucose.

Additionally, sodium is added to help the body absorb the glucose and water. This is also important for workers who are doing labor in the heat. They are also in danger due to water loss and the need to regulate their body temperature.

Water, it is the forgotten nutrient. It is vital to include it in your daily diet. It is important to increase it if you have adverse things happening such as illness, participating in an athletic event or working in extreme heat. The best thing to do is get into a habit of having water during your day. Be friendly to the earth and find a water bottle, the tap is always full!

Resource: <http://extensionpublications.unl.edu/assets/pdf/g918.pdf>

For more information, check out <https://food.unl.edu/> . Also, feel free to contact me here at Buffalo County Extension: [raae.aspen@unl.edu](mailto:raae.aspen@unl.edu) 308-236-1235