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## What's in Your Drink?

Summertime and the living is good! We all know how water is a vital part of us living a healthy life. Do you know how much water you need and are you drinking enough to stay properly hydrated? While we hear over and over that we need eight glasses of water a day, that is not exactly true. If we are out in the heat laboring or playing a sport, you will need to increase your water intake. Let's go through some basics of how to best stay hydrated.

A good place to start is to get an idea of how much water on average you are consuming throughout the day. A great way to do this is to have a water bottle and keep track of how many times you fill it up during the day. When eating out, be sure to select water over sugar, caffeinated beverages. Caffeine is known to dehydrate you, especially if you have a high intake of caffeinated beverages. If you have challenges drinking water, you can add lemon or a bit of 100% fruit juice to flavor your water. There are also a variety of fruit waters you can create such as adding sliced cucumbers and cantaloupe in a pitcher of water, keeping it cold in the refrigerator.

If you are doing activities outdoors and especially if you are doing heavy labor, you will want to get into the habit of making sure you are drinking 8 ounces of water every 15-20 minutes. Should you experience prolonged sweating, you may want to drink a sports drink to help balance your electrolytes. In general, fluid intake should not exceed six cups per hour.

Losing more water than you are intaking is referred to as dehydration. Know the symptoms of dehydration, they include feeling thirsty, dry mouth, urinating and sweating less than normal,

dark-colored urine, dry skin, exhaustion, dry skin and dizziness. Dehydration can be fatal, so you need to know the signs and get proper medical care. For more information on the importance of water intake, visit [CDC Water and Healthier Drinks](#) or visit <https://food.unl.edu/article/tips-staying-hydrated-during-summer> . Have a happy and healthy summer! You can also reach me at my email address: [raae.aspen@unl.edu](mailto:raae.aspen@unl.edu)