

SPLASH INTO EXTENSION

World Water Day, on 22 March every year, is about taking action to tackle the water crisis. Today, there are over 663 million people living without a safe water supply close to home, spending countless hours queuing or trekking to distant sources, and coping with the health impacts of using contaminated water.

The Sustainable Development Goals, launched in 2015, include a target to ensure everyone has access to safe water by 2030, making water a key issue in the fight to eradicate extreme poverty.

Water is a Nutrient, Too

Did you know that there is more water in your body than anything else? More than half of your body weight is water. Water is an essential nutrient because your body cannot make enough to survive. You can only live three to four days without water. Over half of the water you need comes from liquids you drink and over a third comes from food you eat. It is important to drink enough water a day to maintain a healthy level of hydration. Thirst is a sign of dehydration, so don't wait until you are thirsty to take a drink.

Loss of water can cause health problems such as dehydration, heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Dehydration can occur when water in your body is not replaced. Symptoms of dehydration include:

- dry lips and mouth
- a small amount of saliva
- a small amount of urine
- dark yellow urine

The following are warning signs that need immediate medical attention:

- rapid strong pulse
- nausea
- dizziness
- confusion
- high fever
- weakness

If you are going to be outside in the heat:

- ▶ Drink 2-3 glasses of water 1-2 hours before going outside.
- ▶ Take water breaks every 15 minutes.

- ▶ Try to schedule the most strenuous activities for the cooler parts of the day.

How much water do you need every day?

- ▶ Drink water throughout the day and with meals to prevent thirst.
- ▶ Drink more water if you are pregnant, breast feeding, working in hot weather, or exercising.

**It is better to buy, wash, and reuse plastic water bottle containers that are dishwasher safe, than to reuse a bottle in which water was sold because they are hard to clean and dry.

What does water do in the body?

- ▶ It is the transportation system for all body functions.
- ▶ Helps your joints move smoothly. Your brain, eyes and spinal cord depend on water for protection.
- ▶ Moves food through your intestinal tract, washes out waste products, and prevents constipation.
- ▶ Controls your body's temperature.

Food Sources of Water

- ▶ At least 90% of lettuce, celery and other crisp vegetables is water.
- ▶ Fluids such as milk, 100% fruit juices, and clear soups are good sources of water.
- ▶ Grain products such as pasta may be up to 1/3 water.

Fats, such as butter or margarine, contain the least amount of water. Alcoholic and caffeinated beverages (coffee and pop) are poor sources of water because they increase urine production.

Tips for Drinking More Water

- ▶ Place a pitcher of water in the fridge. This way you have cold water ready to drink and can keep track of how much water you are drinking.
- ▶ Add a small amount of 100% fruit juice to water for a different flavor.
- ▶ Use a straw or add ice cubes.
- ▶ Offer children and older adults water to drink throughout the day.

Source: food.unl.edu