

WATER: LIFE'S PRECIOUS INGREDIENT



We all know we must drink water to survive, **but what does it actually do for us and what happens when we don't drink enough?** Water plays many roles in the body from energy production to maintaining cellular health and when we are dehydrated our body can suffer in a multitude of ways.

Dehydration is a state of water deficiency that can be acute and short-term or in the case with many people, a chronic long-term condition. Clinical trials have shown that as little as 2% dehydration in the body can lead to impaired physiological and psychological performance. Symptoms vary from dry skin, headaches, muscle cramps and constipation to tiredness, light-headedness and reduced cognitive function. Research states that chronic dehydration, even low-grade can lead to urinary stone disease, cancers of the breast, colon, and urinary tract and mitral valve prolapse. Dehydration is also a major contributing factor behind insulin resistance, which can potentially lead to weight gain, metabolic syndrome and diabetes, and in today's society, it commonly does.

There are many factors contributing to dehydration, mainly related to the food and drinks we consume. It is probably common knowledge that caffeine and alcohol act as diuretics, thus they will increase the elimination of fluids from the body, but there are also some diuretic herbal teas such as nettle, dandelion leaf and chamomile. This means, if you choose to consume these drinks, make sure you have an extra glass of water or two with them.

An interesting benefit from drinking enough water and being sufficiently hydrated is that in the case of high cholesterol, studies show that it can be lowered into a healthy range. Water also drives energy production, carries nutrients into the cell and helps to maintain the fluidity of our cell membrane.

We are all at risk of dehydration as we lose water constantly through breathing, digestion, exercise, our continual detoxification in the liver and environmental conditions. Water is often under-rated as a drink, however when you have access to clean, fresh water it can be the most satisfying, energising thirst-quencher around.

A healthy amount of water to consume each day is between 2 and 2.5 litres for the average adult. This may seem like a lot, but once you get into the practice of it, it is certainly worth the benefits.

Cheers to your next glass of water!

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods