

## **SPRING 2014 “WELLNESS ALABAMA” WATER—THE KEY TO A HEALTHY LIFE By Christopher Jones and Elisabeth A. Doehring**

Here's a question you've heard many times:  
“How many glasses of water do we need to drink in a day?”

Two, three, four or more? You've heard it so often because it's an important question. Our doctors might say eight.

However, if we want long-term good health, we need to read on.

The equation is easy. What's our weight? Take our weight and then divide that number in half. That's how many ounces of water we need to drink per day. For instance, a person who is 200 pounds will need to drink 100 ounces of water per day to be adequately hydrated. (That equates to 12.5 glasses of water!)

An athlete with a high level of muscle mass needs to drink even more---about two-thirds of their body weight in ounces per day.

Between 55 and 75% of our body weight is water. Our body's need for water is second only to the need for oxygen! Some of the many reasons that we need this life-giving liquid include:

- It assists the digestion, absorption, and elimination of the food we eat
- It assists with the excretion of waste from our bowels and kidneys
- It regulates our body temperature 24/7
- It lubricates our joints and membranes
- It works with our blood in our body's transport system, constantly distributing nutrients around the body
- Our blood is actually made up of approximately 92% water
- Body secretions and digestive juices are almost entirely water (our digestive system produces approximately 1.7 litres of saliva each day)

### **WATER AS AN APPETITE SUPPRESSANT:**

Water is a natural appetite suppressant. Lack of water leads to overeating. The brain doesn't differentiate between hunger and thirst. When we think we're feeling hungry, chances are, our bodies actually need water. So instead of stopping for a visit to our favorite drive thru for a bag of soggy fries or sugary snack at the nearby convenience store, we need to drink a large glass of water before we eat.

If there is no water cooler/dispenser at work, we need to take a two-liter water bottle with us each day - it will help us monitor our water intake.

Water is your body's life force. Without it we would literally dry up!

Some fluids work against hydration, including coffee, diet drinks, and tea. Traditional (as opposed to herbal) teas contain caffeine, which produces increased urine output, and is therefore a dehydrating agent. The more caffeine-related beverages our bodies take in, the quicker water passes through our body. Not a good idea !

### **DIET DRINKS**

Diet drinks contain artificial sweeteners. These synthetic sweeteners send confusing messages to the brain that food (energy) is on the way to the stomach. These sweeteners contain no calories and when no energy arrives the brain in turn sends out hunger messages until food finally arrives. People who drink diet sodas on a regular basis therefore tend to eat too much. The sugar in diet drinks is pure alkaline---and causes inflammation in our joints and fatigue among many other health risks.

Americans generally think of fruit juices as being good for our health. However in reality, they are pure sugar water. Read the labels on fruit juices for sugar content. Look for under 20 grams of sugar per bottle.

Instead of sugar-induced drinks, try fresh fruit. Always far healthier when eaten it is whole---fresh fruit is loaded with fiber in its natural nutrient-rich form.

### **Editors' Note:**

Adding fresh lemon to water actually alkalizes your blood. (People often believe that it is acid. Not true ! It's actually the reverse. Buy lemons—the organic the better ! Float slices of lemons and cheers to H<sub>2</sub>O and life ! Lemons have a cleansing affect on the body.)