

The Facts About Dehydration

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A huge misconception about dehydration is the way one identifies it. Most people think that if they drink when they feel thirsty, they can avoid becoming dehydrated. According to **Franci Cohen, personal trainer, exercise physiologist, and certified nutritionist**, nothing could be farther from the truth. “The fact is that by the time one feels thirst, he or she may already be significantly dehydrated. A better barometer is the color of your urine. The darker the urine, the more dehydrated the body is.”



Our bodies are comprised of 60% water and that water is essential to every cell, tissue and organ in the body. The body uses water to regulate internal body temperature, lubricate joints, maintain muscle integrity and help ease other bodily functions. On a daily basis, the body loses water through respiration, perspiration, urination and even during digestion. And so, it's essential to continuously replenish that loss by drinking water and eating foods with high water content. “The body is at risk for some serious medical conditions if the water loss content is not replaced,” Cohen says.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends 16 to 20 ounces of water at least four hours before exercise, and then another 3 to 8 ounces every 15 minutes during exercise (especially in hot temperatures). Ask your doctor whether you should exercise above a certain temperature, or get an indoors workout.

Cohen stresses that you should be on the lookout for these signs of severe dehydration:

- Extreme thirst
- Little or no urination
- Low blood pressure
- Sunken eyes
- Rapid heart rate and breathing
- Fever
- In extreme cases, delirium or fainting

But before you resign yourself to just water, water, water, Cohen has some other enlightening suggestions for keeping your hydration levels in check:

Celery – this crunchy snack is full of water, rich in fiber and has potassium, which helps the body retain the water.

Cucumbers – this green veggie is the number one of all fruits and vegetables when it comes to water content. It also has vitamin K.

Skim Milk – that's right; it does the body more than good. It hydrates it! Skim milk's natural balance of sodium, carbohydrates and protein helps the body retain fluid.

Coconut water-rich in potassium, it imparts natural sweetness, eliminating the need for added sugars.

Watermelon Water-a recent industry fave that boasts electrolyte enhanced watermelon water, with a refreshing fresh lemon twist. Watermelon is known to be high on salt, calcium, and magnesium which is a definite plus both pre and post exercise.

Franci Cohen is a New York City-based personal trainer, exercise physiologist, and certified nutritionist with a double master's degree in nutrition and exercise physiology. She is the CEO of Fuel Fitness NY. For more information, visit www.francicohen.com.