

# NUTRITION NEWS

WRITTEN BY: SHANNON DAVIS, RD, CDN

LAYOUT BY: JESSICA PHILLIPS

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## Staying Hydrated

The long, hot days of July are here! Heat and humidity bring an increase in the number of cases of dehydration that are seen every day in hospitals across the country. It is extra important in the hot weather to remember to stay adequately hydrated. It's also important to remember that thirst is not always a good indicator of whether you have had enough to drink or not!

Most healthy adults need around 2000 ml of fluid every day. That is the equivalent of eight 8-ounce glasses of fluid a day. Keep in mind that it isn't only limited to water. It can be milk, juice, iced tea – even Jell-O! Anything that would turn into a liquid at room temperature is considered a fluid. Because of this rule, soups, ice cream, and popsicles can also be counted toward meeting your fluid goal!

As we age, our sense of thirst decreases. But our need for fluid remains fairly stable. Therefore, it is important to be conscious of how much fluid you take in in a day.

Even before dehydration sets in, being “dry” can cause a number of problems. It can create bowel issues and can cause headaches. More severe dehydration can also cause an intense nausea, which in turn may make it difficult to take in liquids by mouth. You can see how easily you can be caught up in a vicious cycle!

Other signs and symptoms to be aware of include dark colored urine, less frequent urination, fatigue, dizziness, and confusion.

Keep in mind that your risk of dehydration increases when you have a fever. It can also increase during times of excessive sweating, such as during or after an intense exercise regime. Having uncontrolled diabetes or kidney disease also puts you at an increased risk of dehydration.



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### Monthly Exercise:

#### Wall Push Ups

This will increase your shoulder and chest strength. Face the wall, standing 3 FT away. Keep feet at shoulders width apart. Hands flat on the wall. Lower body towards the wall. Push back. Repeat 10

Summer is a perfect time to try to increase your fluid intake. There are lots of tips for ways to drink more. This is the time when fruits and vegetables are abundant in upstate New York. Try making your own flavored waters with the different produce options that are available. Adding sparkling water or seltzer can make a light and refreshing spritzer to beat the heat with! It can be as simple as putting fresh fruit in a large canister of water and leaving it in the fridge. Try strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, or even cucumbers for starters! Different combinations are endless!

You can also pick up an infuser. This is a special cup that has a container for fresh fruit that will be leaked into the water, creating a flavored drink. Generally, the longer the fruit or vegetable soaks in the water, the stronger the flavor.

Even if you don't like flavored water, increasing your intake of fresh fruits and vegetables will automatically increase your fluid intake. Some foods are more beneficial than others— for instance, cucumbers and watermelon are greater than 90% water. As a rule of thumb, eating a well balanced diet including fruits and vegetables can add an additional 300-400 ml of water each day. That is equivalent to 11 fluid ounces or almost a cup and a half of fluid!

Fluid needs increase with increased fiber intake. Most people attempt to incorporate fiber in their diets to help with bowel regularity. But increasing your fiber intake won't

help at all (and may actually make it worse) if you don't also increase your fluid intake.

Why is fluid intake (specifically water) so important to our health? Our bodies are 70% water. And our blood is 90% water. Water is also essential for the kidneys to function properly. Water is used to lubricate our joints and for protecting our spinal cord, as well as other sensitive tissues. It helps regulate our body temperature and assists in the digestion and absorption of many key nutrients. Adequate fluid intake also promotes skin health and is thought to aid in keeping a youthful appearance.

Our body is constantly losing fluids. Water is lost even through the process of breathing. So it is imperative that we replace the water that is lost.

Many people ask about consuming fluids that are diuretics, such as coffee. I have often been asked if these fluids "count." The answer to that is yes! Studies have shown that the amount of fluid that is consumed is still greater than the amount that is lost.

Keeping track of your fluid intake may be easier than you think. Having two 8-ounce glasses to drink with each meal puts you in a good place to meeting your fluid requirements for the day. Adding a mid afternoon or before bed snack, coupled with a drink, brings you up to eight glasses a day! And don't be afraid to drink more— as long as it's not sugary drinks with empty calories.

While summer is a great time to amp up your exercise routine, it is important to be safe. Falls are a major contributor to injuries in the elderly. Falls can cause moderate to severe injury and can even increase the risk of early death. Here are some sobering statistics regarding falls and the elderly:

- ◆ Falls are the leading cause of death from injury among people 65 and older
- ◆ The risk of falls increases proportionately with age
- ◆ At 80 years old, over half of seniors fall every year
- ◆ 87% of all fractures in the elderly are due to falls
- ◆ Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall
- ◆ Every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall
- ◆ One fourth of Americans over the age of 65 fall every year

Like most chronic conditions, there are a number of risk factors that give you an increased chance of suffering a fall and having a poorer outcome if you do fall. Falls are not just a result of getting older; they can be influenced by your physical condition, a medical condition, or medications. Safety hazards at home or in the community can also increase your risk of falling. Here are some common risk factors that increase your chance of a fall:

- \* Muscle weakness especially in the legs
- \* Your balance and gait—having difficulty walking or losing your balance increases your risk of a fall
- \* Blood pressure that drops too low when getting up from a sitting or lying down position; this can be caused by dehydration or certain

medications. It can also be linked to diabetes, Parkinson's disease, or an infection

- \* Slower reflexes; taking a longer amount of time to react to a fall may make it harder to catch your balance
- \* Foot problems, including diabetic neuropathy
- \* Wearing unsafe shoes
- \* Sensory problems
- \* Poor vision
- \* Confusion
- \* Medications, including certain medications that have side effects such as dizziness. People who take four or more medications have a higher risk of suffering a fall than those who take fewer or no medications

Here is an important checklist— if you answer yes to these questions, you are at a higher risk for a fall.

- Do you have throw rugs on the floor?
- Are some steps broken or uneven?
- Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?
- Is the tub or shower floor slippery?
- Is the light near the bed hard to reach?
- Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?
- Is there a handrail on only one side of the stairs?
  - Are the things you often use on high shelves?

Here are a few recipes to help you enjoy the best that summer has to offer while increasing your fluid intake!

### **Polynesian Watermelon Drink**

**1 seedless watermelon, halved and sliced**

**3 cups water**

**1 (15.25 ounce) can crushed pineapple**

**1 (12 fluid ounce) can evaporated milk**

**1/2 cup shredded coconut**

**2 TBS white sugar, or to taste (optional)**

**1/2 lime, juiced**

Grate watermelon with a fork from the rind into a large bowl, leaving no large chunks. Stir water, pineapple, evaporated milk, and coconut into the grated watermelon. Add sugar, stir until dissolved. Squeeze lime juice into the watermelon mixture.

Try serving it with this summer **Bean Salsa!**

**1 (15.5 ounce) can black beans**

**1 (14.5) ounce can chopped tomatoes**

**1 (14 ounce) can corn kernels**

**1 red onion, chopped**

**1/2 cup chopped mango**

**1 TBS fresh lime juice**

**1 TSP olive oil**

**1 TBS fresh cilantro**

Stir together all ingredients and garnish with cilantro to serve . This can be served as either a dip or a side dish.

### **HEAP**

The 2022-2023 Cooling Assistance Program opened on May 1st, 2023. Individuals who are eligible for this program can receive an AC unit or fan to help keep their home cool. If you would like more information about this program, please contact the HEAP office at 315-867-1195.

## **HERKIMER COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING**

109 Mary St., Herkimer, NY 13350

Phone: 315-867-1121

Fax: 315-867-1448

Email: [hcofa@herkimercounty.org](mailto:hcofa@herkimercounty.org)

Web: [www.herkimercounty.org](http://www.herkimercounty.org); then 'departments' then 'Office for the Aging'

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