

The Health Benefits of Water.  
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In adults, between 50-60 percent of our bodies is comprised of water, with fatter people probably having a slightly lower percentage than thin people. In children, this percentage is even higher, as high as 75% in newborns. With more than half of our bodies being made up of water, water is vital for maintaining our health.

The amount of water needed to maintain health varies by age, sex, pregnancy status, and breastfeeding status. Most of your fluid needs are met through the water and other beverages you drink. If you are drinking enough water daily, you are less likely to suffer discomforts and illnesses such as constipation, migraines, urinary tract infection, kidney stones, asthma, and even hypertension.

Some Health Benefits of Drinking Water.

Body temperature regulation.

Water is essential in regulating body temperature. When it gets hot, your body uses sweat to cool down. Drinking water replenishes the lost fluid through sweat ensuring that you are comfortable in a hot environment, and don't become dehydrated.

Keeps up your energy.

Any significant loss of water can lead to dehydration, which has a negative effect on many of the body's functioning. If your body organs are not functioning effectively, you will feel fatigued and weak. Moreover, studies have shown that being dehydrated by as little as two-percent affects your performance in tasks that require motor, maintaining focus (concentrating), and memory skills.

Dehydration is associated with decreased stamina, and even mood swings. You need to drink adequate water for your body organs to work properly. Your body also needs adequate fluid to produce lymph, which plays an essential role in the body's ability to fight off infection, i.e. the immune system.

Good for heart health.

Drinking a sufficient amount of water helps to maintain the proper viscosity of blood. If the blood is too thick, i.e. viscous, it puts extra strain on the heart, one of the single organs in the body. Becoming dehydrated then puts extra stress on the

heart; if your heart breaks down, you do not have an extra one. Drinking water also helps to maintain healthy blood pressure and heart rate.

Transportation of minerals and nutrients.

The minerals and nutrients dissolve in the water making it possible for them to reach all your body parts. Without water, it would be impossible for nutrients and minerals to be transported around the body.

Flushes out toxins.

The body is a fully functioning machine that uses the lung, kidneys, and liver to flush out waste products. Water helps your body get rid of harmful toxins through sweat and urine. And by getting rid of toxins, water helps to keep the kidneys and urinary tract healthy. After the organs have detoxified the body, they heavily rely on water to get the toxins out of the body. This also helps in the fight against illness: if impurities build up in the body, you will get ill.

Prevents headaches and cramps.

Dehydration causes headaches; drinking water helps to prevent and relieve headaches caused by dehydration. Dehydration is also associated with cramping. Water acts as a natural lubricant, making your muscles and joints more flexible and reducing the likelihood of experiencing sprains and injuries.

Helps you control weight.

Drinking water helps your body maintain healthy body weight. Many of our chronic non-communicable diseases (cncds) are 'weight-related', i.e. overweight and obesity are important triggers that precede diseases like diabetes, hypertension and the dyslipidemias (such as high cholesterol); in turn these conditions often precede heart attacks, heart failure and strokes. Even many of our common cancers are 'weight-related'. Water has no calories, so drinking water, especially instead of sugar-sweetened beverages, helps prevent weight-gain.

Drinking cold water helps to raise metabolism as the body must produce more energy to keep warm, which makes your body burn more calories.

In Summary.

There are many benefits of drinking water, and probably many more health benefits not mentioned here. Drinking water has very few downsides unless

excessive quantities are consumed, and 'water toxicity' is the result. This only happens in extreme cases. Everyone is encouraged to consume adequate quantities of water every day to maintain optimal health and stamina.

Getting water every day is critical. Don't take in enough water, and you will become dehydrated. Lose too much water, which can occur with excessive sweating, vomiting and/or diarrhea: you will become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause your body to overheat and not 'work right': drinking water can prevent this. Water has no calories, so it can also help with managing body weight and reducing calorie intake, especially when substituted for sugar-sweetened beverages. Everyone should consume water from foods and beverages every day. You can get some fluids through the foods that you eat, especially foods with high water content, such as many fruits and vegetables. But most of the water should come from drinking liquids.

Happy World Water Day 2023!

**Dr. Alert is on the Board of Directors of The Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc.**