

Healthy You: Quick Facts

The NATION'S HEALTH

Drink this in: Hydration tips to keep you healthy

Staying hydrated keeps your body healthy and mind sharp. Drinking fluids helps your heart move blood, your brain stay sharp and your kidneys remove waste. It also helps your body control temperature. Dehydration can lead to kidney stones and urinary tract infections and other health issues. The good news is that staying hydrated is pretty easy.



Photo above by Jacob Wackerhausen, below by Urban, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on hydration:

1 Water is your best hydration choice. Unless your doctor says so, you don't need fancy energy or electrolyte drinks. Stay away from sugary drinks. And remember that drinks with caffeine can make you urinate and lose fluids faster.



2 As a rule, you should drink after waking up, with meals and after activity. You may need more fluids if you are being active, such as walking outside a lot, if you're sick or taking certain drugs.

3 Your urine can offer a clue about your body's fluid needs. Dark urine may be a sign that you need more fluids. Pale yellow urine is generally a good sign.



4 Older people may not feel thirsty when they are dehydrated. Your body's thirst signal may not work as well as you age. In that case, setting a reminder or goal for the day can help.

5 Spread your drinking out throughout the day. If you drink too much at one time, you will lose much of the water your body needs when you go to the bathroom.

>> For more tips on hydration, visit www.nutrition.gov