

## The Basics

Water is essential for life and getting the right amount is important for great health but is something we often overlook. Our bodies are made up of about two thirds water and it is involved in every biochemical role in your body therefore staying hydrated is important for optimal health and wellbeing



## Benefits

All cells of the body need water to transport nutrients into them and move wastes out – therefore it is essential for the function of all tissues and organs of the body. Some more specific benefits include:

- \***improving energy levels** and reducing fatigue
- \***regulating body temperature** – water lost through sweating needs to be replaced.
- \***lubricating** and cushioning joints
- \***aiding weight loss** - hunger can often be confused with thirst so drinking more water can stop you snacking unnecessarily.
- \***better brain health** – our brains are made up of 85% of water so being hydrated improves our focus, mood and concentration.
- \***supporting detoxification** - getting rid of toxins and waste from our bodies.
- \***supporting digestion** – it helps produce adequate fluids for digestion like saliva, digestive enzymes and stomach acid which play an essential role in the digestion and absorption of nutrients. Inadequate hydration can also lead to constipation.
- \*staying properly hydrated **balances electrolytes** in your body. These are minerals like sodium, calcium, potassium and magnesium which have important roles including: balancing the amount of water and pH, moving nutrients into cells and wastes out, help your nerves, muscles, heart and brain work at their best.

## How much water do you need?

Individual water needs will vary for individuals depending on overall health, activity levels and where you live. The average man needs between 1.2 – 3 litres per day, whereas the average women between 1.2 and 2.2 litres. This works out around 6 – 8 glasses which is a reasonable goal for most. We also get water from our food with fresh fruit and vegetable containing the most.

How you drink your water can also make a difference – your body retains more water by drinking little and often rather than having it in one go.

**Here are some of the short-term signs of dehydration:** feeling thirsty, dizziness, headaches, lack of concentration, hunger, low energy, dry eyes, mouth and skin, constipation, dark, strong smelling urine.

**Longer term consequences include:** risk of kidney stones, high blood pressure, digestive issues, depression,

## Helpful Hydration Tips

- \*take water with you and always have it at hand. If its accessible then you are more likely to drink it.
- \*use a bottle/container that is large enough but also easy to drink out of, chose a style that suits you. Some even have helpful time reminders to prompt you when to drink.
- \*have a glass of water by your bed to drink on waking, starting your hydration first thing.
- \*increase foods with a higher water content like fruit and vegetables.
- \*chewing food properly means it needs less water to digest it therefore using less water in the body.
- \*flavour your water to make it more enjoyable so you are inclined to drink more - add slices of lemon, lime, orange, cucumber, mint, berries.

