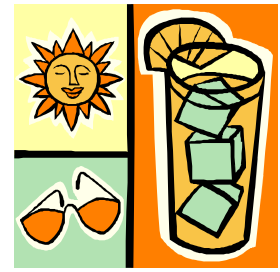


# Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



July 2009 Newsletter

## Hydrate for Your Health

By Amy Zack, BS

### **WATER** makes up

about 60-70% of your body! Its vital role in your body includes carrying nutrients to your cells, excreting wastes, providing a moist environment for ear, nose, and throat tissues, and regulating body temperature. Staying hydrated is important, especially during these summer months!



### Fluid Recommendations

You lose water through perspiration, urination, bowel movements, and even through your breath. These fluids need to be replaced. The Institute of Medicine recommends that adults ages 50 years and older consume:

2.7 Liters/day for *Females* (~11 cups)

3.7 Liters/day for *Males* (~15 cups)

This recommendation is for *total* water, which includes all water contained in food, beverages, and drinking water. **Recommendations for fluid intake vary** by age, gender, body size, genetic traits, illness, medications, and other conditions. Some conditions increase a person's need for fluids.



These include:

- Cold or hot weather
- Some medications (such as diuretics)
- Physical activity
- Prolonged diarrhea, vomiting, and fever
- Alcohol consumption
- Increased salt, sugar, or protein intakes

Some conditions may require you to limit your fluid intake, such as heart failure and some types of kidney and liver diseases that may impair excretion of water.

\*\*\*If you are concerned about your fluid intake or needs, check with your doctor or a registered dietitian. He or she can help you determine the amount of water that is best for you.\*\*\*



### Changes That Come With Age

Many individuals experience a decline in muscle mass as they age; this is accompanied by a loss of body water. This means, in general, that older people have lower water reserves to call upon when needed

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and therefore get dehydrated much faster than younger adults. Also, the ability to sense “thirst” weakens over time, so older adults reach a greater state of dehydration before they realize they need water. It is best to drink water throughout the day, even when you do not “feel” thirsty.



## Symptoms of Dehydration

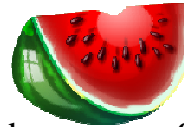
**Mild to moderate symptoms** include: dry sticky mouth, sleepiness or sluggishness, thirst, decreased urine output, headache, dizziness or lightheadedness, and muscle weakness. **Signs of severe dehydration** include: extreme thirst, lack of sweating, irritability and confusion, very dry mouth, skin and mucous membranes, little or no urination, urine that is dark yellow or amber colored, low blood pressure, rapid heart beat, and fever. In most serious cases, dehydration can lead to delirium or unconsciousness.



## Fluid Sources

Foods provide about 20% of your fluid needs, with the other 80% coming from water and other beverages. Water is the best source for fluid replacement. Other beverages such as juice and milk are composed mostly of water. Coffee, tea, soda, and alcoholic beverage can also contribute but should make up

only a small portion of your daily fluid intake because these can act to eliminate fluids from the body. Fluids can also come from foods such as fruits and vegetables. **Some fresh fruits and vegetables that are composed of mostly water** (>90% by weight) are: bean sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, cantaloupe, collards, lettuce, okra (boiled), peaches, spinach, squash, strawberries, tomatoes, and of course, watermelon.



## TIPS FOR STAYING HYDRATED WHEN IT'S HOT

- Carry a refillable water bottle
- Purchase a home water filter for your faucet – makes water taste better AND saves you money if you were going to buy bottled water
- Drink fluids even when you don't “feel” thirsty
- Eat foods with a higher water content as snacks
- Freeze fruits such as grapes for a sweet, cold treat
- Smoothies – helps you get fluids and servings of fruits!

