

Hydration



The human body is over 60% water, so it is important we drink enough fluids to maintain this balance, especially during the warmer weather. Water lubricates joints and eyes, aids digestion, flushes out waste and toxins and keeps skin healthy.

The NHS advises that we should be drinking about six to eight glasses of fluid a day. Waiting until you feel thirsty is too late, as by this time we are already dehydrated. Healthy fluids can include water, sugar free squashes, diluted fruit juice, coconut water and fruit teas. Water is the healthiest way to stay hydrated – it is readily available, safe to drink straight from the tap, has zero sugar and can be livened up by adding a slice of citrus fruit or cucumber. However, all-natural juices without added sugar provide hydration as well as nutrients, such as vitamin C, to keep you active and nourished in hot weather. Keep a water bottle with you to regularly top up your fluid levels!

On a hot day we will lose fluid through sweating which cools us down and helps us maintain a regular temperature. Dehydration occurs when your body loses more fluid than you take in. To avoid dehydration in warmer weather, drink more than you would normally. Signs of dehydration to look out for include thirst, feeling lightheaded and dry, dry mouth, tiredness, and darker coloured and reduced frequency of passing urine.

The food you eat can also help you to stay cool. Fruit and vegetables have a high-water content and are easy to digest. Hydrating foods include watermelon, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, vegetable broths and soups. A touch of spice can also help your body cool down as it encourages sweating – try adding a pinch of cayenne pepper or salsa to your meal!

Some possible benefits of drinking water:

- May improve your memory and mood. Even mild dehydration could impair memory in children and increases the risk of headaches and migraines. Good hydration can improve focus and concentration.
- Aids weight maintenance where the brain can confuse hunger with thirst. When you get a sugar craving, drink have a glass of water first and then see how you feel.
- Aids digestion and helps avoid constipation and the build-up of toxins in the gut.
- Aids physical performance. Dehydration impacts negatively on muscles, not just on how well they perform, but also their ability to repair after exercise. Dehydration can also lead to stiff and aching joints as moisture is drawn away from cartilage which creates increased friction between bones.

Keep well hydrated for maximum fun in the sun!