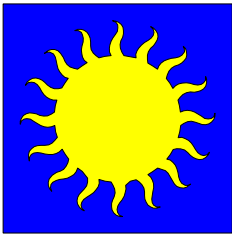


## WATER: A JOB DESCRIPTION

- ◆ Transports nutrients.
- ◆ Carries away waste.
- ◆ Moistens eyes, mouth, and nose.
- ◆ Hydrates skin.
- ◆ Ensures adequate blood volume.
- ◆ Forms main component of body fluids.
- ◆ Protects against heat exhaustion.
- ◆ Helps carry medicines to the proper places in the body.



## RISKS FOR OLDER ADULTS

Dehydration is a major risk for older adults. Older people may have a reduced "sense" of thirst, decreased kidney function and loss of total body water, which contribute to dehydration.

Besides thirst, other symptoms of dehydration are dry mouth, flushed skin, fatigue, headache, dizziness and increased body temperature and pulse.

Dehydration is one of the leading causes of hospitalization among people over 65.

It is especially important to get enough water/fluids during hot weather, heavy exercise and periods of illness with fever, vomiting or diarrhea.

## DO YOU DRINK ENOUGH WATER / FLUIDS?

It is important to drink 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses per day, whether you feel thirsty or not. A healthy adult loses 8-12 cups of water each day through normal body functions. (Some fluids also come from the foods we eat.)

While water is the best source of fluid for your body, these foods and beverages can also contribute to your daily requirement:

- ◆ Carbonated water and caffeine-free sodas
- ◆ Juices and juice drinks, cider
- ◆ Decaffeinated coffee and tea
- ◆ Hot chocolate
- ◆ Milk
- ◆ Broth-based soups

If you need help adding water to your daily routine, try these tips:

- ◆ Take "water breaks" throughout the day.
- ◆ Have a glass of water, tea, or juice with your meals.
- ◆ Start off lunch or dinner with a cup of soup.
- ◆ Never pass by a water fountain without taking a sip!
- ◆ Drink water before, during and after physical activity.
- ◆ Take a bottle of water with you in the car, on the train, or on the airplane.

## CAFFEINE FACTS

Caffeine can act as a diuretic, causing fluid loss. Beverages containing caffeine include coffee, tea, and some sodas, especially colas. A "rule of thumb" is to count half the amount of beverages with caffeine toward your total fluid intake.

If you decide to cut down on your caffeine consumption, do it gradually. Try substituting decaffeinated types of your favorite beverages.

## TAKE TIME FOR TEA



Next to water, tea is the most common beverage in the world. There are three good reasons to make tea one of your fluid choices. Tea has about half the caffeine of coffee. Second, tea is a good source of water. Third, new research shows that antioxidants in tea may reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.

## COOL QUENCHERS

1. In a blender, puree melon chunks or peach slices with buttermilk, crushed ice, and a touch of ginger or cinnamon.
2. Combine one 6-ounce can of grapefruit juice concentrate with two 12-ounce cans of chilled club soda or sparkling water. Serve with a sprig of fresh mint. Makes 2-3 servings.
3. In a blender, puree berries, pineapple chunks, and frozen limeade concentrate. Add some fresh mint, if desired.



From The American Dietetic Association's Complete Food and Nutrition Guide (Minneapolis: Chronimed Publishing; 1996), p 185.

# WATER WORKS

## Water: A Job Description

### Risks for Older Adults

### Recommendations

- ◆ Amount Needed
- ◆ Sources of Water

### What About Caffeine?



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