

This Summer: Stay Healthy, Stay Hydrated

It's time for barbecues, boating, swimming and more—all the summertime activities that make this time of year fun and a great time to be active. It's also a prime time to get dehydrated. Staying hydrated is a key to good health all year long, but it's more difficult during hot weather.

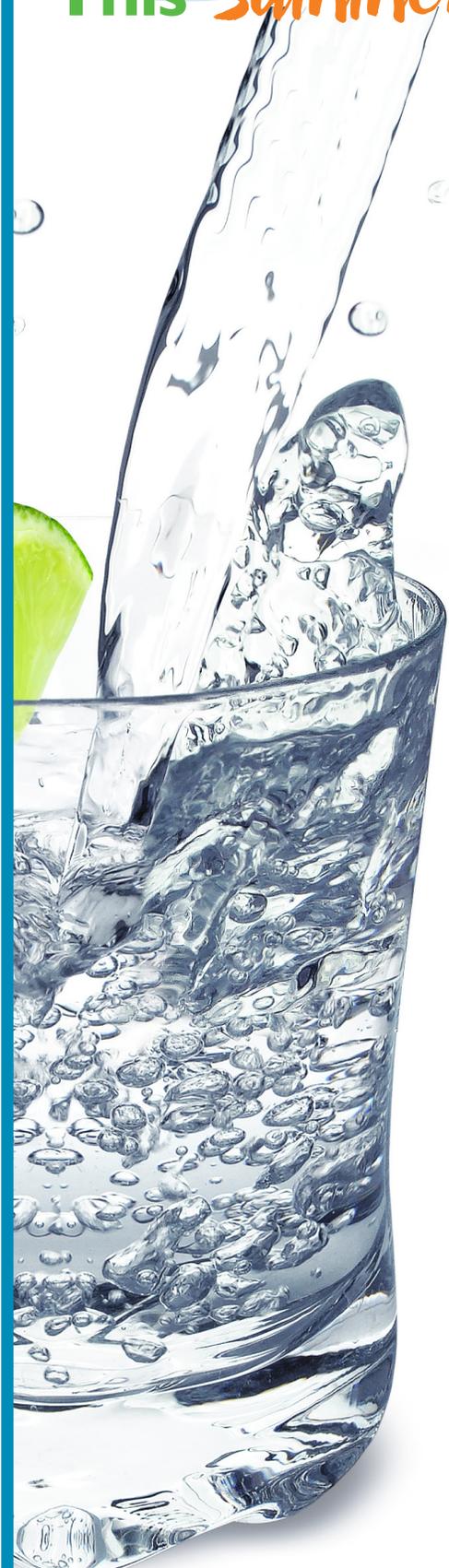
So how much is enough water? The old eight glasses a day rule doesn't work for everyone. Sixty-four ounces may be too much for inactive people or far too little for those who exercise or work outdoors. Hydration needs can change daily and are highly individual.

Although severe dehydration has serious health consequences, even mild dehydration can be damaging. Research shows that losing just 2% of your normal, well-hydrated body weight can contribute to fatigue, difficulty concentrating, confusion and impaired mood.

How to Make Hydration a Habit

Many people are so busy that they barely have time to eat, let alone pause for a water break, and you may find you often go hours without quenching your thirst. But staying hydrated has real advantages, including helping you maintain your energy and focus so you can operate more efficiently. Here are some simple ways to make fueling up with fluid throughout the day a little easier:

1. Always carry a water bottle, and if you have a desk job, always keep one at your desk. If you have a bottle within arms reach, it's very likely that you'll sip from it throughout the day, without having to make a conscious effort.
2. When you're feeling frazzled or hazy, grab a glass of cold water. Studies show that people instantly feel more alert after drinking H₂O. It's a simple, healthy way to snap out of a mid-day slump.
3. Sip on a cup of herbal tea every evening. If you make this a habit, you'll add an extra cup of fluid to your tally every single day. On top of that, this relaxing ritual is a wonderful way to de-stress at the end of the day.
4. Eat a diet rich in whole foods. By eating water-rich foods like vegetables, fruits, and yogurt, you'll automatically up your fluid intake. One obvious summer example, of course, is the aptly-named watermelon. While watermelon is renowned for its high water content (and it's delicious flavor!), it also has essential electrolytes that your body needs for nerve and brain function. On the other hand, processed snack foods like chips, crackers, and baked goods have minimal water content.
5. If you're an elderly adult or a caretaker for one, it's especially important to pay attention to hydration. Aging impairs the body's natural thirst mechanisms, which makes it easier to become dehydrated. It may be helpful to fill up a big water bottle (at least 1 quart/liter) at the beginning of the day, with the goal of emptying it by the end of the day. The water bottle is a physical reminder to drink even if you're not thirsty.
6. The American Heart Association notes that when the temperature and humidity are both above 70, you enter the **dehydration danger zone**. Stay safe by having a glass of water before each meal, setting reminders on your phone, watch or e-mail to drink water, and drinking a glass of water to replenish your fluids after each trip to the restroom.



July is UV safety month!

While some exposure to sunlight can be enjoyable, too much is dangerous. Overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun can result in a painful sunburn. It can also lead to more serious health problems, including skin cancer, premature aging of the skin, cataracts and other eye damage as well as immune system suppression. Children are particularly at risk.

Skin cancer, while largely preventable, is the most common form of cancer in the United States. More than 3.5 million new cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually. By following some simple steps, you can still enjoy your time in the sun and protect yourself from overexposure. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends these action steps to help you and your family be "SunWise:"



Check the UV Index

The UV Index provides important information to help you plan your outdoor activities in ways that prevent overexposure. The UV Index forecast is issued daily by the National Weather Service and the EPA.

Don't burn

Sunburns significantly increase your lifetime risk of developing skin cancer, especially for children.

Generously apply sunscreen

Generously apply about one ounce of sunscreen to cover all exposed skin 15 minutes before going outside. Sunscreen should have a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 30 and provide broad-spectrum protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.

Seek shade

Seek shade when possible, and remember that the sun's UV rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Use extra caution near water, snow and sand

Water, snow and sand reflect the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chance of sunburn.

Recipe: Thai Citrus Chicken Salad

Ingredients

For the salad:

- 1 chicken breast, cubed
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cup green cabbage, shredded
- 1 cup red cabbage, shredded
- 1/2 cup corn, fresh or frozen
- 1 cup carrots, shredded
- 1/2 cup tomatoes, chopped
- 1/4 cup green onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pepper to taste
- 1/2 lime, cut into wedges

For the dressing:

- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 to 1 jalapeño, or to taste

Directions

1. Sprinkle cubed chicken breast with salt and pepper, and add minced garlic. Set aside for a few minutes.
2. Over medium-high heat, heat a skillet or pan and add olive oil.
3. When oil is hot, add chicken breast and cook, turning occasionally to brown on both sides. Remove when done, about seven minutes. Squeeze juice from a wedge of lime on the chicken, and set aside to cool.
4. In a large bowl, mix together the rest of the salad ingredients (red and green cabbage, carrots, corn, tomatoes, green onion, and cilantro). Set aside.
5. In a small bowl, combine all salad dressing ingredients and mix.
6. Pour dressing into a blender, and blend or stir with whisk until well blended.
7. Add chicken and dressing to salad, and mix to combine. Serve with a lime wedge.

Nutrition Information per serving (makes 4 servings): 225 calories
12 g fat | 325 mg sodium | 12 g carbohydrates | 23 g protein | 7g sugar
3.4 g dietary fiber | 57 mg cholesterol | 605 mg potassium

