

Water

You are not just what you eat; you are what you drink

"Water is a necessity and not a statement of fashion or expression of health consciousness"



Myth and Facts:

It is true that water consumption is necessary to maintain a healthy physical state. We can't live without water. The human brain is about 85% water and our bones are between 10 to 15% water. On an average we are 60 % water. We need to keep the natural water balance in our bodies, but not to over indulge.

The notion that one needs to drink five to six quarts (5-6 liters) of water a day to remain fit and to detoxify the body is just a myth. It is true, as a general guideline, that most adults need about three quarts of fluid each day. But, the key factor to remember is that most foods that we eat are already quite heavy in water content. If you eat plenty of foods that are naturally rich in water, such as vegetables, fruits, and cooked legumes and whole grains, you may not need to drink that much water. A logical approach is to drink as you feel the urge and thirst. Drink small amounts of water as you feel the desire for it.

In physical composition, we are very close to other animals on this planet. Animals hardly ever gulp huge quantities of water. There are many medical conditions (like kidney stone formation etc.) that require larger quantities of fluid intake. Excessive water drinking may lead to kidney failure, liver damage, brain swelling, coma, and even death. People are disrupting their body's internal chemistry and damaging their organs by over watering themselves.

When too much water enters the body's cells, the tissues swell with the excess fluid. Our cells maintain a specific concentration gradient, so the excess water outside the cells (the serum) draws sodium from within the cells out into the serum in an attempt to re-establish the necessary concentration. As more water accumulates, the serum sodium concentration drops (hyponatremia). At the cellular level, hyponatremia produces the same effects as would result from drowning in the water.

In order to maintain the natural electrolyte balance, water from outside the cells rush into the cells via osmosis. Electrolytes are more concentrated inside the cells than outside, the water outside the cells is 'less dilute' since it contains fewer electrolytes (due to excess water intake). Both electrolytes and the water move across the cell membrane in an effort to balance the sodium concentration. Theoretically, cells could swell to the point of bursting.

The electrolyte imbalance and the tissue swelling may cause an irregular heartbeat, allow the fluid to enter the lungs, and may cause fluttering eyelids. Your kidneys must work overtime to filter the excess water out of your blood circulatory system.

Our kidneys are not the plumbing pipes, whereby the more water you flush through your kidneys, the cleaner they become; rather, the filtration system that exists in our kidneys is composed of a specialized type of capillary structure, called the 'glomeruli'. These glomeruli can get damaged by excessive wear and tear over time. Overburdening your filtration system, with large intake of water, may lead to kidney failure.

Ingesting more water than your body needs increases your total blood volume, and that puts unnecessary burden on your heart and blood vessels. Continuation of this condition may cause serious damage to cardiovascular system.

Over drinking may also lead to swelling in the 'brain membrane. Since the bones that make up your skull hardly budge, the resulting pressure due to the membrane swelling causes an increase in intra-cranial pressure - Depending on how much water you drink in a short period of time, you may experience a wide variety of symptoms, ranging from a mild headache to impaired breathing. Membrane swelling also puts pressure on the brain's neural system which leads to a behavior that resembles alcohol intoxication. Swelling of brain tissues can also cause seizures, coma and ultimately death.

