

Water: It's An Indispensable Nutrient
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Water: The Indispensable Nutrient

What is the most abundant compound in your body? What is utilized by every body system? What is the most important, but most forgotten nutrient? **WATER**

Is it a myth that drinking water and other fluids during exercise impairs performance? Is a sports drink a better fluid replacement than water during intense exercise? Drinking water before, during and after exercise is essential to prevent dehydration! Dehydration decreases performance and can cause serious harm to the body. Staying well hydrated allows athletes and casual exercisers to perform at their best. Water is the best drink for replacing fluid losses during exercise lasting less than one hour. However, during intense exercise lasting longer than one hour, you need to replace the sodium lost in sweat and carbohydrates you burn for energy. Commercial sports drinks supply water, sugar and electrolytes, including sodium. They promote fluid retention and tend to encourage drinking because of their taste. On the other hand, these beverages are higher in sugar, can cause nausea, and dehydration.

Consuming sports drinks is not necessary for most people participating in physical activities lasting for one hour or less in moderate temperature conditions. Instead choose plain water for it is rapidly absorbed. Be aware of how the media has influenced our belief that even a non-distance runner or those who exercise for shorter periods of time need to consume sports drinks.

What about bottled water? Bottled water is the fastest growing drink choice in the United States and Americans spend billions of dollars each year to buy it! It can be a good beverage choice for it contains no caffeine, no calories and no sugar. It is convenient to carry and often has a better taste and smell than tap water. BUT bottled water is much more expensive per gallon than tap water. It is important to consider your reasons for purchasing it and compare the cost to the value provided. Long-term storage of bottled water may result in an off-odor and taste. It is recommended that plastic water bottle be stored in a dry, dark place away from chemicals such as paint thinner, gasoline and cleaning chemicals. After reading these ideal storage suggestions, consider the times you have seen piles of bottled water outside a warehouse/grocery stores. This display method is certainly not the ideal storage method described above.

Let me conclude with a phrase that I consider more often referenced in the world of economics---Excellent Rate of Return. Maintaining your body is a lot like running a business. You have certain assets available to keep you body healthy. These assets include nutritious food, physical activity, and adequate rest. However, one of the greatest assets you have at your disposal is a liquid asset....plenty of water and nutritious fluids. Your body can't survive for long without fluids. Your body will function a lot better if you remember to make large deposits of fluids into your health account every day. Consistent deposits of liquid assets can contribute to large dividends of good health.

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