

A to Z of drinking water

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- A** Already paid for from you tap
- B** Brain function is improved when you drink water
- C** Can prevent and cure constipation
- D** Does help to keep weight down by suppressing appetite
- E** Everybody should drink six glasses per day
- F** Feeling tired and sluggish? Water can improve your energy level
- G** Gastritis improves when you drink water
- H** Health is improved when you drink plenty of water
- I** Indigestion is improved when you drink water
- J** Juices in the body flow better when you drink water
- K** Kidneys and bladder function better when you drink water
- L** Lower back pain is reduced when you drink water
- M** Minerals in water help to maintain good health
- N** No other drink is as safe for all ages as water
- O** Obesity can be reduced by drinking water to suppress appetite
- P** Prevents your teeth from decaying
- Q** Quality drink for reducing thirst
- R** Reduces salt build-up in the blood
- S** Skin and lips need plenty of water to stay soft and fresh
- T** Toxins are reduced from your body when you drink water
- U** Urine is free from infection when you drink water
- V** Very important to prevent bed-wetting because it helps to teach the bladder to stretch and hold fluid during sleep
- W** Water is essential for life: we will die without water
- X** eXtra water is needed by our bodies when we are ill or tired
- Y** You have a headache? Water can help cure it.
- Z** energize your body by drinking more water.

Health benefits of drinking water

- The body is 75% water and 25% solid matter. Our body needs to stay well hydrated to operate at its best. A well-hydrated body will not only function more efficiently, but may also avoid many health problems.
- It is important to remember that our brain tissue is 85% water. Therefore brain functions rely heavily on a good intake of water. Studies have shown that with prolonged dehydration, brain cells actually begin to shrink. This could be the reason why some children do not show their full potential. (Hannaford, C., 1995).
- The New York Times guide to personal health states that a reduction of 4-5% of body water will result in a decline of 20-30% in work performance.
- Water helps to reduce sluggishness and increase activity allowing children to be more energetic and alert throughout the school day.

Water helps to

- Rid the body of waste and toxins
- Maintain proper muscle tone
- The mineral content in the water provides essential nutrients
- Reduce sodium build up
- Metabolise stored fat
- Suppress appetite - helpful in the treatment of obesity
- Relieve constipation
- Without ample water intake the pancreas is less efficient, acids in the stomach are not properly neutralised and the functions of the intestines are inhibited. This leads to constipation, colitis pain, false appendicitis pain and even hiatus hernia and gastritis.

Water can relieve

- Lower back pain
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Headaches
- Allergies caused by commercial drinks

- Water also helps to maintain the shape of blood cells
- Regulates body temperature
- Helps the kidneys in filtering blood.

Fizzy drinks and health

- It is important to remember not to confuse water consumption with fluid consumption. Coffee, tea and fizzy drinks are not acceptable substitutes for drinking water. We need to consume even more water if we are drinking sweet drinks. The sugar in the fizzy drinks draws fluid out of cells, causes increased urine production and acts as a dehydrating agent. This increases bed wetting in children.
- Research has clearly shown that fizzy drinks can cause hypocalcaemia, obesity, tooth decay, behavioural problems such as tiredness, irritability and short concentration / attention span. (Wyshak, G., June 2001).

Take home message

- Cold water is absorbed more quickly and may allow the body to burn more calories, helping to maintain normal body weight.
- Offer children water to drink.
- Make drinking water available and accessible to children at school and at home.

This information was compiled by Radha Sethi of Manchester Health Promotion Specialist Service, 0161 882 2300.