

Water wisdom

The human body is about 60% water, and needs water daily to function well. Here's a review of research and expert recommendations about water intake.

How much to drink: Experts agree that most adults get about the right amount, neither too much nor too little, of total water intake. The average total intake from water, other beverages and food, is 13 8-oz. cups daily for men and 9 cups for women. These averages can be used as a general guide for how much to consume.

Individual water needs can vary greatly, even from day to day, mostly because of differences in physical activity, environmental conditions and diet. Fluids are lost through breathing, sweating and excretion. Hot weather, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and illness require more fluids. It appears that increased fluids might reduce the risk of urinary tract infections, kidney stones, bladder and colon cancer, but more research is needed.

When to drink: Follow your thirst, both in general and when exercising. Drink when you are thirsty, and don't drink when you are not. Thirst may not be a good guide in extreme heat if you are not acclimated to it, or in cold weather, or if you are over 65. In those cases, increase intake moderately but don't force yourself to drink.

What to drink: It's easy to drink extra calories without realizing it, in part because fluids do not give the same feeling of fullness as do solid foods. Since many Americans are overweight, experts say that most of the time you should drink water and other fluids with few or no calories, saving the higher calorie beverages to meet specific dietary needs or for special circumstances or occasions. If you don't like the taste of water, add a zero-calorie or low-calorie drink mix packet, or a slice of citrus fruit, or try tea or a flavored water or seltzer. *Caffeine* in beverages causes you to excrete more fluid in the short run, but the effect is negligible. So, count the full amount of caffeinated drinks as you estimate your daily intake.

Sports drinks provide valuable carbohydrates and electrolytes. Have both water and sports drinks available during prolonged exercise, drinking whichever appeals to you when you are thirsty.

From Dietary Reference Intakes for Water, Potassium, Sodium, Chloride, and Sulfate; Institute of Medicine, 2004, found at iom.edu, and the International Marathon Medical Director's Association guidelines, 2006, found at about.walking.com

Recipe of the Week – Turkey Cabbage Soup

8 servings – adapted from Jane Brody's Good Food Book

1 pound lean ground turkey
 1 cup chopped onion (1 large)
 46 ounces tomato juice, low sodium (1 large can)
 1 ¼ pounds green cabbage, chopped or shredded fine
 3 large carrots, peeled and chopped
 3 ribs celery, chopped
 1 bouillon cube or packet or 1 tsp. instant (low sodium)
 Fresh ground pepper to taste
 2 Tbsp. each brown sugar and lemon juice (optional)

1. In a large pot, brown the turkey and onion, breaking up the meat into small bits. Drain off any fat.

2. Add tomato juice, cabbage, celery, bouillon cube and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover the pot and simmer for 1 to 1 ½ hours. If it gets too thick, add water.

3. When the soup has finished cooking, if desired add lemon juice and sugar while soup is still hot, and stir till sugar is melted and sugar and lemon juice are well blended into the soup.

4. This soup freezes well.

Nutrition information:

Calories: 150

Saturated fat: 1 gram

Dietary Fiber: 3.6 grams

Total fat: 3 g

Carbohydrates: 17 grams

Protein: 15 grams

Tip of the Week

Chin up when walking - it should be parallel to the ground. Your eyes should focus on the street or track 10 - 20 feet ahead. Good posture for walking allows you to breathe well and provides a long body line to prevent problems with your back, neck, and shoulders. And, you'll be able to more easily spot friends going by, or potential hazards on the street.

From walking.about.com