

The Importance of Hydration

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Hot temperatures in Dominica are an important reason to get plenty of fluids to drink to stay hydrated. Why is this so important, you ask? Your body is made of about 60% water. It uses water to help your body to work at its best and to be healthy. Dehydration or excess fluid loss places a strain on your body. It causes you to perform poorly.¹ This is more true in hot places.² You need water to keep you cool; for your lungs and skin; for your pressures; to help you breathe; and for other reasons.^{2,3,4}

How much fluids should I drink and what kind?

The amount of fluids you need depends on many things. How hot it is; the clothing you wear; how hard you exercise; and how much you sweat are all things that can impact your body's needs. You need to drink enough water to replace what you lose in a day.³

Some drinks add salt to help stimulate your body to absorb carbs. This leads to more water uptake. If you do a hard work out, it may be important to replace lost salt in sweat. For ath-

letes or people who work out heart, drinks with sodium may help to prevent heat cramps and tiredness.²

You should drink water to stay hydrated. It is best. Other good options are unsweet tea, and herbal infusions. Foods with veggies or fruits may help to give water. Sugar soft drinks are worst.⁴

What are signs that I need water?

Many things can help you to tell when you need to drink water. A few tips to look out for include if you are:^{1,3}

Not sweating when you exercise

Thirsty

Sweating a lot

Feel dizzy

Have weak pressures

You may be exhausted from the heat if you:⁵

Have a headache

Sweat a lot with cold skin and chills

Feel dizzy

Get muscle cramps

Cannot breathe

If you are exhausted from the heat, get to a doctor or nurse right away.

What are some things to avoid?

Drinks containing alcohol cause your body to lose water or fluids. Caffeine may cause some fluid loss. Recent studies suggest fluid loss from caffeine was low when drank before exercise.^{4,6}

Who should stay hydrated?

Some people should be more careful of not drinking enough water. Infants and children; older adults, people who are active, and the ill should be extra careful.⁴

We all need water. Make sure you water the water you drink. Watch how you feel and stay hydrated today! You will feel well and your body will say thanks!

References available on request.

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