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5 Tips on How to Stay Hydrated this Summer!

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Staying adequately hydrated is an essential part of everyday health. With the upcoming summer months, we're bound to be spending more time outdoors and higher temperatures can leave us dehydrated before we even know it! To properly prepare, we've answered 5 common questions regarding fluid intake and offered some tips to keep you feeling hydrated and energized this upcoming season.

How much water should I be drinking?

Most people have probably heard that 8 glasses a day keeps the doctor away. And while this is a reasonable goal to shoot for (and probably more than what most people drink), this may not be adequate for every individual. According to the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, an adequate daily fluid intake for men is 15.5 cups (3.7 L) and about 11.5 cups (2.7 L) for women. Yes, that seems like a lot. But don't freak out, this is accounting for fluids from water, food, and other fluids typically consumed in a day. The amount of fluid needed specific to your body may be different from the above recommendations depending on body size, what type of activities you engage in, and/or other health conditions.

How do I know if I'm properly hydrating?

An easy way to determine if we're properly hydrated is to pay attention to your sensation of thirst and the color of your urine. If you're not feeling thirsty and your urine is clear to light yellow, you're probably doing a good job hydrating. If you notice you're thirsty, have dry mouth, and/or your urine is a dark yellow, it's time to hit your water bottle.

Can I hydrate with anything other than water?

Absolutely. While water is almost always the recommended source for fluid, you can still keep your body hydrated with the addition of other fluids from things like milk, tea, juice, seltzer water and fruits like watermelon. Caffeinated beverages (coffee, soda, diet soda) can also contribute to your fluid intake as long as the caffeine amount is within your usual daily intake range. When you consume too much caffeine and your body isn't adapted, it can have a reverse (diuretic) effect that leaves you dehydrated. Additionally, there's no benefit in including sugary beverages in your diet so keep those sodas to an absolute minimum.

What about alcoholic beverages?

A sunny cocktail by the pool is almost inevitable in the summer and is a fun addition to the season! However, those awful hangovers that seem to get worse as you age? Yeah those hangovers that you're experiencing are essentially severe dehydration. So if you're choosing to have an alcoholic beverage, make sure to keep yourself hydrated while doing so. Space out your drinks with glasses of water before and after each beverage.

What are some easy ways to consume more water throughout the day?

- **Water bottles: Having a water bottle filled and ready to go will remind you of how much (or how little) you have drank throughout the day. Like a dietitian, it will keep you accountable and serve as a constant reminder to drink more water!**
- **Jazz up your water: Fruits, vegetables, and herbs are thriving in summer. Add some zest to your water to make your drinks more enjoyable. My personal favorites include lemon, cucumber, and mint; strawberries and basil; and lemon, blueberries, and lavender.**
- **Choose water dense fruits: Cucumbers, watermelon, zucchini, and grapefruit are all over 90% water. Keep these on hand especially on days where you need some extra hydration.**