



## Diabetes and Healthy Hydration

Water makes up about 60% of our body weight and helps to lubricate joints, transport nutrients in the blood, cushion and protect vital organs, and regulate body temperature, among other functions. Water is depleted as we breathe and perspire so you can see why it's important to stay well hydrated every day.

For those with type 2 diabetes, drinking lots of fluid is especially important as it helps to remove excess sugar out of the blood stream, lowering blood sugar levels.

### How much fluid do I need on a daily basis?

The Institute of Medicine has set daily general recommendations for total water intake – from all beverages and food- for women at approximately 2.7 liters (91 ounces) and men at approximately 3.7 liters (125 ounces). If you're active, or living in a hot environment, you'll need to make sure you're consuming more to stay hydrated.

### Do other foods and liquids count?

If you're doing the math and realizing that all those ounces come out to more than you normally drink, rest assured that we can hydrate our bodies with other fluids besides water and even with foods to reach our recommended daily amount



Although it's recommended to drink lots of water, no one expects you to live by water alone. You can mix things up by creating your own flavored waters, by drinking low-fat milk and also by consuming low-sodium soup, as well as vegetables and fruit (foods provide about 20% of most people's daily water needs). Moderate amounts of unsweetened tea and coffee can also be part of the hydration solution; the myth that caffeinated beverages dehydrate us has been proven untrue. Some research has also suggested that coffee may in fact reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. 1

### Here are a few tips to keep you well-hydrated and sated:



Don't let thirst be your only guide. If you find yourself thirsty, you're already dehydrated. It's best to drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated. Keep a glass of filtered water at your desk – or if you're on the go, in a portable water bottle – so you can sip on it throughout the day. (At work, it's a great excuse to get up from your desk every hour to refill your glass.)



Before grabbing a high-calorie treat, drink a glass of water. Often times, we think we're hungry, but we're actually dehydrated. That glass of water may just save you extra calories you really don't need to consume.



Drink a glass of water or sparkling water with each meal, and between meals. Enjoy a glass of water first thing in the morning when you get up; you'll feel more refreshed and awake. If you're active, drink water before, during and after exercise. Limit your intake of 100% fruit juices since the calories can add up and they don't deliver the fiber that you would get if you ate a piece of fruit instead.



To create flavored water, add a few sprigs of well-washed fresh herbs such as mint or basil to a pitcher of filtered water and refrigerate. For a citrusy flavor, add slices of lemon, lime, or orange to the water; they can be used by themselves or in addition to the herbs.



Lemonade is refreshing in hotter months; you can freshly squeeze your own, or purchase a minimally-processed brand, but be sure it's low in sugar and salt.



And don't forget that most foods also contain water. Sliced carrots, cucumbers, peppers, and celery are great candidates for hydrating snacks. Use them as dippers for hummus or Greek yogurt, or top with a small dollop of peanut or nut butter.



For a sweet pick-me-up or for a refreshing dessert, berries, peaches, watermelon, and apples are juicy thirst quenchers.



If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. The American Diabetes Association recommends that women have no more than one alcoholic drink per day, and men no more than two. One drink is equal to 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of hard liquor. (A helpful tip is to alternate sipping water with your alcoholic drink; this can help you stay happily hydrated).



Drinking on an empty stomach can lower blood sugar and cause hypoglycemia, especially if you take insulin or other diabetes medications, so be sure to enjoy your alcoholic drink with a meal or snack.



Staying hydrated is a key factor in a healthy diet, and especially important for those with diabetes. Getting enough fluids can be easy if you sip on water, club soda, and other unsweetened beverages, and eat a balanced diet throughout the day.

<sup>1</sup> Ming Ding et al. Caffeinated and Decaffeinated Coffee Consumption and Risk of Type 2 Diabetes: A Systematic Review and a Dose-Response Meta-analysis, *Diabetes Care*, February 2014, 37:2 569-586; doi:10.2337/dc13-1203  
<http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/37/2/569.full>