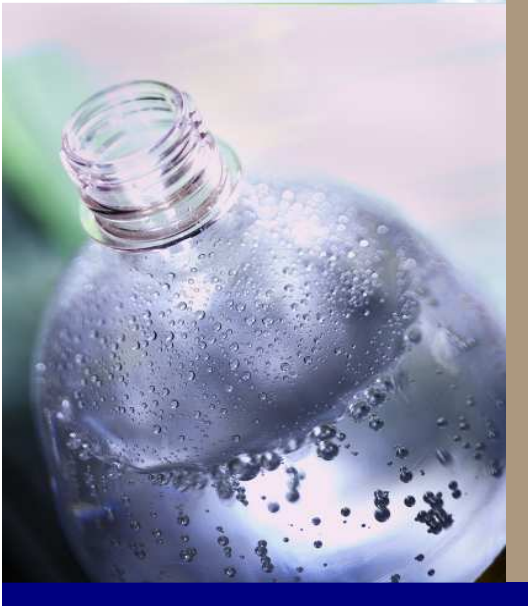


- ❖ *Sodium Chloride (Salt)*
- ❖ *Potassium*
- ❖ *Water*

Don't forget these other great resources:
For more information consult your Healthwise® Handbook, the 24-Hour Nurse Line, Nurse Online Chat, Audio Health Information Library® and www.express-health.com



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The Hydration Equation



To be adequately hydrated, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (IOM) report states that we should be more concerned about our sodium and potassium intake than our water intake.

Sodium Chloride (Salt)

Sodium and chloride are important elements for the body, but too much can elevate blood pressure. Those individuals with diabetes, hypertension, or kidney disease and older individuals are more sensitive to the increase of blood pressure than others. The IOM report recommends a total 3.8 grams of salt a day to replace daily losses. Most Americans consume more than 5.8 grams of salt each day. Decreasing salt intake could help with hydration and overall health.

Potassium

Potassium works against salt in the body and helps to lower blood pressure while also reducing the risk of kidney stones and bone loss. The report recommends a total of 4.7 grams of potassium a day, but most Americans consume only half the recommendation. Choose foods high in potassium such as bananas, papayas, raisins, broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, brown rice, milk, and nuts.

Water

Most healthy people will maintain hydration by letting thirst be their guide. The general recommendation for water intake for women is 2.7 liters or almost 9 8-ounce cups of water a day. For men, it is 3.7 liters or 15 cups of water a day. Food makes up 20% of the total water intake. The other 80% is obtained through drinking water and other beverages including caffeinated beverages. Increased exposure to heat and prolonged exercise can increase the need for water, but beware that too much water can be life-threatening.

Caution:

Like most healthy behaviors, it is possible to drink too much water which can lead to hyponatraemia or water intoxication. As water in the blood increases, the salt content is diluted. The amount of salt available to body tissues decreases, which can lead to swelling in the brain, heart and other muscles. Initial symptoms of over-hydration include dizziness, headaches, nausea, apathy and confusion, similar to dehydration.

The risk of water intoxication is low for those who have properly functioning kidneys, but drinking too much in a short period of time can lead to water intoxication. Those who are at highest risk include marathon runners, those who exercise excessively, infants, elderly, and those who have kidney dysfunction.