

gather.

nutrition fact sheet



Hydration in Students

Our bodies are made up of approximately 60% water, making it vital for life and to maintain health. Water is essential for our bodies to work properly; and when dehydration occurs we do not function at our best. In this fact sheet, we explore why it is important to drink adequate fluids, how to recognise signs of dehydration and daily tips to stay hydrated.

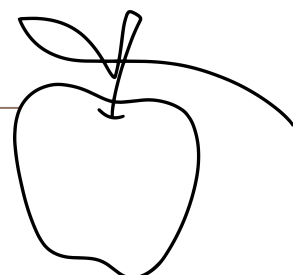
Why do we need water?

Water provides a number of vital functions required for life including:

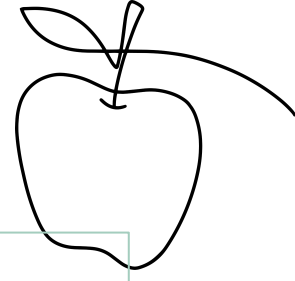
- Transporting nutrients around the body
- Regulate body temperature
- Flushes out toxins
- Healthy digestion

When water is lost through breathing and sweating, our bodies can become dehydrated.

Studies have shown that even a 1% reduction in the water levels can impact upon mental and physical functioning, with this increasing as dehydration progresses. Additionally, the human body can only survive for three days without water, whilst it is able to survive for up to thirty days without food.



Benefits of being well hydrated



Whilst studying:

Staying hydrated improves the functioning of the body, and the brain is no exception. When you don't drink enough water during the day, the brain functions at a lower level.

Studying in particular can be affected by hydration status with some studies suggested that being properly hydrated can improve both memory and focus. In fact, one study examined the effect hydration had on cognition in school aged children. The results found that those who were more hydrated scored better on short term memory and attention.

During sport:

If you don't stay hydrated, athletic performance can suffer. It is important to maintain hydration, before, during and after exercise. This is particularly true for endurance athletes, where dehydration can occur very easily.

Water also plays a significant role in muscle repair post exercise. Exercise causes muscles to become stronger by breaking down, and then rebuilding through a process called protein synthesis. In order for this process to perform properly, water is required. Therefore drinking adequate water is important to allow quicker repair of muscles post exercise and sports.

During exams:

The brain is made up of almost 75% water, and is therefore strongly influenced by your hydration status. A recent study found that on average only 25% of students bring water into exams. However, those who did drink water during had a slightly higher academic performance in comparison to those who did not. This is because staying hydrated allows you to think clearly and at a higher clarity, as well as maintaining focus. Additionally, some studies have found that being properly hydrated can help to alleviate anxiety, which can also be particularly important during exam times to help you to think clearly.

Whilst sleeping:

Whilst sleeping there is no opportunity for water replacement to make up for any fluids that may have been lost during sleep, such as through breathing. Going to bed already dehydrated, increases the risk of not getting a good night's rest. If you are not resting properly or end up waking up during the night, it means you are unable to achieve quality deep sleep, which can then affect your energy and cognitive function the following day.

Tips to keep hydrated

Begin any exercise well hydrated

Aim to drink small amounts frequently throughout the day

Perform activities out of the direct sunlight and preferably at cooler times of the day i.e. early morning or late afternoon

Drink fluids with your snacks and meals

Take regular drink breaks to rehydrate during exercise

Rehydrate immediately after exercise

For more information, please visit:

Queensland Government - Dehydration

<https://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-events/news/am-i-dehydrated-dehydration-adults-children-elderly-symptoms-signs-treatment-heatwave>

Better Health Channel - Water A Vital Nutrient

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/water-a-vital-nutrient>