

Health Concepts

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Health literacy for better healthcare.

PREFACE

Health literacy, or the ability to understand, access, and use appropriate health information, is an important factor in improving health outcomes. For example, people with higher health literacy are more likely to adopt healthier behaviors and manage their chronic health conditions like diabetes, hypertension, etc. better. Recent studies have shown that people with lower health literacy levels are generally 1.5 to 3 times more likely to have poor health outcomes than people with higher literacy levels.

Yes, there are challenges to healthcare communication. Most often, patients do not understand the medical language and the numbers in medical reports, leading to deficiencies in healthcare delivery.

Poor healthcare communication results in inappropriate use of healthcare services, lower patient satisfaction, costlier, less efficient healthcare, and the worst patient self-management, all leading to worse health outcomes.

Informed individuals, regardless of background, education, or socioeconomic status, can drive positive change in healthcare delivery. A healthy community collaboratively prevents diseases and ensures accessible healthy living options. There is a need to empower people to gain control over their health and participate in healthcare delivery decisions.

An informed community is a healthier community.

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS

तरबूज (Hindi)
தர்பூசணி (Tamil)
పుచ్చకాయ (Telugu)



WATERMELON

Watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*) is a flowering plant species of the *Cucurbitaceae* family and the name of its edible fruit. Watermelon fruit is 91% water, contains 6% sugar, and is low in fat and calories. Vitamin C is present in appreciable content at 10% of the Daily Value. Watermelon pulp contains carotenoids, including lycopene. Even watermelon seeds have benefits, with magnesium, iron, healthy fats, and zinc. It is a perfect treat to quench your thirst during the summer heat.

Helps you stay hydrated- High water content in watermelon helps hydrate and support your body.

Protects against disease- Rich source of antioxidants, which help protect your body from stress and prevent or slow cell damage.

Boosts your immune system- Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) supports your immune system, which fights germs and infections. It may also help reduce your risk of developing cancer.

Relieves muscle soreness- Citrulline in watermelon removes ammonia from your body and helps produce nitric oxide to improve blood flow and muscle function.

Improves digestion - Plant compounds (polyphenols) in watermelon fuel good bacteria in your gut.

Manages blood sugar - Helps keep your blood glucose levels steady or reduce your risk of diabetes as it has few carbs and a low glycaemic load.

Supports eye health - Antioxidants may help prevent or delay the formation of cataracts. Vitamin A supports the health of your corneas.

NOTE Eating too much watermelon may cause digestive issues such as abdominal discomfort, bloating, gas, and diarrhoea due to its high fermentable short-chain carbs content that is either nondigestible or slowly absorbed in the small intestine.

MEDICAL UPDATE NEVER SKIP BREAKFAST.

Remember, breakfast sets the tone for your day.

Kickstarts Metabolism:

- Breakfast helps your body burn calories throughout the day.
- A balanced morning meal can aid in weight management and provide sustained energy levels.

Fuel for the Brain:

- After a night of fasting, breakfast provides essential nutrients and energy to the brain.
- It improves concentration, focus, and cognitive function.

Nutrient Intake:

- A nutritious breakfast supplies vital nutrients like vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber.
- These nutrients are crucial for overall health and well-being.

Blood Sugar Regulation:

- Breakfast helps stabilize blood sugar levels, preventing spikes and crashes.
- This prevents cravings and overeating later in the day.

PREVENTIVE PEARLS

Sipping water is a better approach during rehydration. Drinking too much water too rapidly can disrupt your body's electrolyte balance. Maintaining the right balance of water and electrolytes is crucial for your body's health. Sip water slowly to allow proper absorption and prevent overloading your system.

“Pure water is the world's first and foremost medicine.”

----- Slovakian Proverb

Dehydration in summer months.

Dehydration is one of the leading health problems all over the world during warm weather and summer heat. Of course, summer is the most coveted and enjoyed time of the year when outdoor activities become an everyday occurrence.

Dehydration occurs when the body loses more fluids than it consumes. When it is hot and humid, sweat can't evaporate and cool you as quickly as it normally does, and this can lead to an increased body temperature and the need for more fluids.

A deficiency in fluid intake or extra fluid loss from the body can cause dehydration, which could impair biological processes and cause an imbalance in electrolytes. The wider issue is that not only are you losing water when sweating, but you are also losing electrolytes. These are also called salts and are generally sodium, potassium, and calcium. These electrolytes are vital for many key bodily functions.

Water is the substance that fuels all our body's basic functions, and it makes up 60% of our total mass.



Dehydration can be caused by: Diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sweating, tears, breathing, and increased urination.

Diarrhoea is the most common reason a person loses excess water. Frequent, watery stools lead to heavy water loss from the body. Summertime is host to several bacterial and viral infections, causing loose stools.

Extreme physical activity in hot weather signals the body to produce more sweat to keep it cool, but it can also cause dehydration if water is not replenished.

Are you dehydrated?

What does dehydration feel like?

MILD-MODERATE SYMPTOMS			SEVERE SYMPTOMS		
					
THIRSTY	DRY MOUTH	HEADACHES	LOSS OF STRENGTH	CONFUSION	DIZZY
					
MUSCLE CRAMPS	DRY SKIN	DARK URINE	RAPID HEARTBEAT	RAPID BREATHS	FAINTING

Dehydration is a condition that can manifest in several different ways, from a simple dry mouth and light-headedness to seizures or even slipping into unconsciousness.

There are three stages of dehydration: mild, moderate, and severe, and the time taken to recover varies accordingly. In general, it can take up to three days to recover.

All symptoms of mild dehydration are your body's way of warning you that you need to drink water. Immediate rehydration to replenish your body fluids is necessary.

The most severe form of dehydration is also known as heat stroke. If you or anyone you are with begins to suffer any of these severe symptoms, then you need to get them indoors and make them lie down with ice packs and damp cloths to bring down their internal temperature, as well as get them to drink water immediately.

In general, the average adult should aim to drink at least eight glasses of water per day.

Dehydration can happen to anyone. However, it is particularly threatening for infants, young children, older adults, and people engaging in outdoor activities or sports.

Tips to stay hydrated during the summer months :

- Drink plenty of water, especially when you are working or exercising outside.
- Eat foods with high water content, such as whole fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid caffeinated drinks, alcohol, and aerated drinks.
- Infuse water with natural, flavourful ingredients, such as limes, lemons, berries, mint, oranges, or cucumber.
- Try Coconut Water.
- Recognize and address signs of dehydration
- Dress appropriately in light clothing.

END NOTE

You shouldn't have to worry about experiencing the symptoms of dehydration if you always have a bottle of water on you.

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