**Day 12**

**Title: Wonderful Water**

Your body is made up of about 60 percent water. Every cell in your body contains water. Water also flows through your blood vessels, surrounds your brain and spinal cord, and helps cushion your joints. Your body uses water for just about everything it does. Water helps move nutrients and other important materials to your muscles and organs. Water helps move the waste out. It also helps your body to maintain homeostasis, or balance, especially when you’re under stress from physical activity, illness, and other challenges. Water really is the stuff of life.

**So how much water do I really need?**

Given the number of people carrying around water bottles and the number of magazine and online articles reminding you to drink 8-10 glasses of water each day, it would seem as if everyone is in constant danger of dehydration. But do you really need this much water every day?

The Institute of Medicine, a private, non-profit group in the United States that provides scientific advice and guidance, recommends healthy adult women get 2.7 liters (91 ounces) of water each day from *all sources*. For healthy adult men, they recommend getting 3.7 liters (125 ounces) each day. But, before you rush out and buy an even larger reusable water bottle, re-read the part about “all sources.” About 20% of the total water we need each day comes from food. The rest comes from water and all other beverages. Half of this should come from plain drinking water.

**Let your thirst be your guide**

Even though healthy, sedentary adults lose about 58 ounces (1700 mL) of water each day through normal body functions, your body regulates the balance of water. When your body needs more water, your kidneys pull water out of urine and put it back into your bloodstream. Your brain also tell you that you’re thirsty. If you pay attention to your thirst and drink more water than you need at the moment, your kidneys put the extra into urine. At that point, nature usually calls. The good news is that most people get enough water each day just by letting their thirst be their guide. So, if you’re thirsty, drink up. But let at least half of what you drink be water.

**When you’re thirsty, be choosy**

All beverages, including tea, coffee, sodas, milk, and juices, contain some amount of water. Unlike plain water, though, these beverages bring along extra stuff for the ride. Some of this is helpful, like the vitamins and minerals in milk and juices or the antioxidants in tea and coffee. Some of this isn’t so helpful, like the fat in milk, sugar in sodas and juice, and calories in everything besides plain tea and coffee. Nevertheless, your body can use the water in these beverages just like it does with plain water. The key here is knowing what else you get with that beverage, and keeping everything in balance.

**But I don’t like water because (fill in the reason here)...**

If you’re used to drinking sodas and other flavored beverages, switching to drinking plain water may be a challenge. Try adding a splash of fruit juice to plain or sparkling water. Reduce the amount of juice over time to help your taste buds adjust to drinks that aren’t as sweet. Or switch out one flavored beverage for water each day.

Try varying the temperature of your water. Maybe you like ice water. Or maybe that’s not your thing and you’re happy with room-temperature. Warm water also works. Try different temperature and find what works the best for you.

Even try different methods of drinking your water. Do you like water bottles with sports caps? Or try keeping a cup with a straw on your desk so you can sip water without having to take your eyes off what you’re working on. However it works for you, find a way to make water your go-to beverage instead of sugary, high-calorie drinks.

**Sources**:

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