

Title:
Drink Up

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Summary:
Most Americans get plenty of fluids, according to a report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the scientific body that establishes nutrition recommendations for Americans. The IOM recommends a total of about nine daily cups of fluid for women and about 13 cups for men.

Keywords:
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Article Body:
Americans are big drinkers…of water, that is. We keep bottles of water in our cars, at the office, in our gym bag and in our briefcase or purse. Travelers bring water onto planes and trains. I don't remember what we did before bottled water became so popular, but I bet we didn't drink as much.

Most Americans get plenty of fluids, according to a report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the scientific body that establishes nutrition recommendations for Americans. In fact, aiming toward a goal of eight daily glasses of water in addition to other fluids in your diet probably is not necessary.

The IOM recommends a total of about nine daily cups of fluid for women and about 13 cups for men. Keep in mind, however, that everything that we drink counts-water, milk, coffee and tea, juice and soft drinks-as do water-rich foods like fruits and vegetables. Of course, water is calorie-free, which makes it an attractive option.

"Use thirst as your guide," advises Jo Ann Hattner, R.D., a nutrition consultant in San Francisco, Calif. "Drink when you're thirsty and you probably will get enough fluids over the course of the day." Hattner points out that older adults are the exception. "Older adults often don't have a good thirst mechanism so they won't feel thirsty even though their body needs fluids." Be sure to drink a lot if you are physically active, live in a hot climate, or are taking a vacation to a warm and/or dry climate.

Include foods that are high in liquid to help keep your body hydrated. Start the

day off with Whole Grain Total topped with milk and fresh fruit. Enjoy soup or a large salad with your lunch. Include vegetables at dinner, along with fruit for dessert. Hattner suggests being aware of the color of your urine to determine whether you've had enough fluids. "If it's light in color, you're fine. If the color is dark, then your urine may be too concentrated and you need to drink up!"

Ask Mindy

Q: Do coffee and tea count? I am a coffee drinker and was told to drink extra water since coffee makes the body lose extra fluid.

A: Coffee and tea do count. Contrary to popular belief, coffee, tea and other caffeinated beverages are not dehydrating, though they may have a temporary diuretic effect, and do not cause the body to lose extra fluids.