



Healing From the Inside Out: Hydration and Fluids

A WOUND NEEDS FLUIDS TO HEAL

Hydration status affects blood volume, blood circulation, and skin turgor, all of which are important in the wound healing process.

Water is one of the main components of cells. When the body is deprived of water, the development of new cells and the growth of new tissue slow down. Dehydration delays healing and increases the risk for infection.

FACT

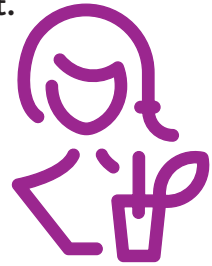
Women are approximately 50% to 55% water; men are approximately 55% to 65% water.

That means a 165-pound man is 90 to 107 pounds water!



FACT OR FICTION: 8 GLASSES A DAY RULE

Fluid needs are based on how much a person weighs. Eight glasses a day is a good general rule, but smaller or larger people may need to make an adjustment. People with heart failure or kidney disease also may need to adjust that general rule.



HINT

The easiest way to tell if you are not drinking enough water is to analyze your urine.

It should appear relatively clear and odorless.

THIRST ALERT

As we age, our thirst mechanism becomes less sensitive. Stay alert for these early signs of dehydration:

- Dry, warm skin
- Flushed face
- Unable to pass urine or passed in reduced amounts that are dark yellow
- Dizziness made worse when standing
- Cramping in the arms and legs
- Crying with few or no tears
- Feeling sleepy or irritable
- Headaches
- Dry mouth, dry tongue with thick saliva

SPECIAL BEDS

Air-fluidized therapy beds, which often are used with serious wounds or surgical repairs, may increase the evaporation of body fluids.



WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

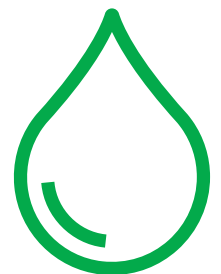
You need extra fluids if you are vomiting or have diarrhea, a high fever, or a heavily draining wound. If these conditions last for more than 1 or 2 days, call your doctor.

TIPS FOR STAYING HYDRATED

- Keep favorite beverages on hand
- Take a few sips of a beverage during each commercial break while watching television
- Serve cold beverages cold and hot beverages hot to make them more enjoyable
- Avoid caffeinated and alcoholic beverages, which may contribute to dehydration
- Eat gelatin, fruit ices, and other foods that have a high-water content, such as watermelon
- Use cups with handles, straws, or angled mouthpieces if needed
- Try a ready-to-drink nutrition shake if you also need extra calories and protein

REMEMBER!

A person can survive weeks without food, but only days without water.



Based on information from:

Collins N. Avoiding dehydration in patients with wounds. *Ostomy Wound Manage.* 2015;61(2):8-11.

Baranoski S, Ayello EA. *Wound Care Essentials: Practice Principles.* 3rd ed. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2012.