

Hydration for a healthy heart

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NUTRITION and Hydration week (March 13–19) is an annual event that aims to educate and celebrate improvements in the provision of nutrition and hydration.



When thinking about heart health, we often think about nutrition and the impact this can have, but we can forget to consider how inadequate hydration levels can negatively impact our cardiac health.

This week's Healthy Tip is all about hydration, and how it's an essential component to our health and optimal functioning of our cardiovascular system.

Why is hydration important?

Water accounts for about 60% of our body weight, and every single cell in our body needs to be properly hydrated to work well. Water performs many roles in the body, such as regulating body temperature through sweating, lubricating joints, and removing waste products via bowel movements and urination. If we don't drink enough fluids the amount of blood circulating in our body decreases. When this happens the heart must beat faster and our blood pressure may be affected, which can increase our risk of a cardiac event.

Signs of dehydration

Dehydration occurs when we lose more fluids (through urination and sweating) than we replace with the fluids from the food and drinks we consume. Symptoms of moderate dehydration include not urinating much throughout the day, dark yellow urine, muscle cramps, thirst and a dry mouth.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms often, it's a good idea to increase your fluid intake.

Ways to drink more

Drinking water is the easiest and cheapest way to ensure you stay properly hydrated, but there are other drinks that count towards your liquid intake such as herbal teas, sugar-free juice and low-fat milk. The NHS recommends drinking six to eight cups or glasses of fluids every day, which is about one-and-a-half to two litres.

Fruits and vegetables also contain water, so increasing the amount you consume can improve your hydration levels. Some great options include cucumber, tomatoes,

apples, watermelon and peaches.

For more tips on how to stay healthy, sign up for a weekly healthy tips at:
www.heartresearch.org.uk/healthy-tips