- Drinking water / Immune system

HOW WATER SUPPORTS IMMUNITY

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To keep you healthy, your immune system relies on a well-hydrated body. This summer season, maintaining optimal hydration is more important than ever.

Here's why you need to pay more attention to consuming enough water, according to Susan Bowerman, worldwide nutrition education and training senior director at Herbalife.

Adults have up to 60 percent water in their bodies, so it's no surprise that you need to stay well-hydrated to stay healthy. Proper hydration supports digestion, nutrient absorption, and waste elimination. Without enough water, regulating body temperature becomes difficult, joints lose lubrication, and muscles fatigue more quickly. Every cell, tissue, and organ needs water to function properly.

Just like every other system in the body, the cells of your immune system require nutrients to do their job.

Water is an important component of the lymphatic fluid, which contains specialized white blood cells, called lymphocytes, that help the body fight infection. As the lymphatic fluid circulates, it helps remove waste products, toxins, and impurities from your body—including bacteria and viruses.

Another way that water and fluids support immunity is by maintaining the health of your mucous membranes. These membranes protect those areas inside of your body that are exposed to air—like your nostrils, mouth, and throat. When your body lacks adequate fluid, your nasal passages may become dry, making the barrier less effective.

Here are tips to help you stay hydrated:

See the amount of water you plan to drink and track your progress over the day. Put the amount of water you plan to have in a pitcher on your kitchen counter or at your desk. It will serve as a reminder to drink more.

Make it cold. Cold water often seems more refreshing than room-temperature water. Try stashing a bottle of water in your freezer and carry it with you during the day. It will stay cold for several hours, and you might be encouraged to drink more.

Drink first thing in the morning. Keep a glass or a tumbler of water by your bed and make reaching for it a morning habit.

If you find drinking water boring, make it fun by adding flavor with a slice of fresh lemon or lime, cucumber, a few berries, some fresh mint, or fresh ginger.

Don't forget that watery foods like fruits and vegetables (particularly cucumbers, melons, tomatoes, and leafy greens) can contribute to your overall daily fluid needs, so include plenty of these healthy foods in your meals and snacks.

Keep track of how much water you drink. If you want to go high tech, there are apps for your phone that can send you drinking reminders.