



My intention here is based on a personal interest and to create greater awareness of the subject by putting up some general information. It must NOT be considered as 'official' medical advice as I am not qualified – just well intended on this matter.

You may be surprised to hear that we are not as solid as we appear. In fact water makes up over 60% of our bodies.

There is substantial evidence from recent surveys and health reports that a significant portion of the UK population does not drink enough water to meet recommended guidelines. While 80% of adults believe they stay hydrated, tracking data suggests that only 42% actually meet the recommended 6-8 glasses (1.5 – 2 litres) per day. We are seriously kidding ourselves..



Hydration is critical for life, a fundamental pillar of health, it is essential for every cell, tissue and organ in our bodies to function, including the regulation of temperature, transporting nutrients, lubricating joints and removing waste. Hydration needs vary - based on age, sex, activity levels and climate but the general recommendations for daily fluid intake should apply, with very active males up to 3 litres. We will feel the need during warmer times but it's essential to keep it going in colder times as well.

Key aspects of hydration for general health are;

- Essential Body Functions – water regulates body temperature via sweat, it acts as a shock absorber for joints, keeps muscles functioning properly, reduces the risk of cramps, aids indigestion and nutrient absorption.
- Preventing Dehydration Risk's – it prevents headaches, constipation, urinary tract infections and kidney stones.
- Cognitive and Physical Performance – adequate fluid intake is crucial for concentration, keeping your brain and memory sharp and is essential in maintaining alertness and preventing physical fatigue.
- Indication of Hydration – a reliable indicator of good hydration is pale, straw coloured urine.
- Sources of Fluid – while water is the best choice, hydration can come from tea, coffee, milk, fruits and vegetables.

Recent research suggests that staying well hydrated may slow biological aging and reduce the risk of chronic conditions like heart and lung disease.

Dehydration can be recognised by:

- Dark yellow or amber coloured urine.
- Dry mouth and chapped lips.
- Headaches, dizziness or light headedness.
- Fatigue and unexplained tiredness.
- Reduced frequency of urination.

And, severe dehydration can be life threatening.

Practical suggestions:

Drink little and often – regular sipping is more effective for absorption than gulping large amounts.

- Keep water accessible – carry a bottle or keep a glass on your desk as a visual 'trigger'.
- Eat hydrating foods – about 2% of fluid intake can come from water rich foods like cucumbers, watermelon, strawberries, lettuce and celery.
- Natural flavours – try infusing the water with slices of lemon, lime or fresh mint
- Be aware that alcohol is a diuretic that increases fluid loss. Moderate caffeine is generally fine but excessive intake can impact hydration levels.
- Hydration is not inherently better than moisturising – they are two different but complimentary processes. Hydration adds water to the skin while moisturising locks it in – so ideally you need both for healthy good looking skin.

There is increasing interest in relation to the impact of hydration on mental health. The human brain is about 75% water! Even mild dehydration – losing just say 1% to 2% of your body's water – can disrupt the delicate chemical balance required for brain cells to operate efficiently.



Research indicates that proper hydration is directly linked to emotional stability and the adverse risks mental health disorders. Large scale studies show that individuals who drink at least 5 glasses of water daily have a significantly lower risk of depression and anxiety compared to those who drink 2 glasses or less. Dehydration triggers the release of Cortisol (the stress hormone) and can impede the production of 'feel-good' neurotransmitters like Serotonin and Dopamine. Even minor fluid loss can lead to increased feelings of tension, irritability and a heightened 'fight-or-flight' response.

When you are dehydrated your brain has to work harder to perform basic tasks leading to 'brain fog' – difficulties with concentration, focus and alertness. But, will also cause memory impairment and slower reaction times. Water is essential for oxygen delivery to the brain and without it you may experience significant mental fatigue and lethargy. Adequate hydration provides better sleep which is crucial for cognitive restoration.

The 'message' should be clear. If you have any comments / opinions we want to hear them at windlesham.life

