








WATER IS AN ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

All healthy food contains “NUTRIENTS”. These are the building blocks which your body uses to build strong bones and teeth, promote growth, maintain healthy metabolism, fight infection, heal wounds, and so much more. You can most likely name the categories of nutrients: Carbohydrate, Protein, Fat, Vitamins and Minerals...BUT most people forget the last one...**WATER!!!**

WATER is an essential nutrient. All living things including trees, pets and people must have water to survive! Half of our body weight is made of water. We can live for several weeks without food BUT we will die in a few days without water.








Our body uses **water** for many functions, including:

-  **Transportation:** **Water** helps to move all the other NUTRIENTS and supplies throughout our body. **Water** is part of your blood, the body’s transportation system. Every body cell in needs **water** for its constituents to move freely.
-  **Lubrication & Protection:** **Water** acts as a cushion or shock absorber to protect our brain, eyes and spinal cord. **Water** helps our joints like elbows and knees move easily.
-  **Moisturizer:** **Water** keeps our body parts from drying out and getting sick – like our eyes, skin, nose, and mouth.
-  **Eating & Chewing:** **Water** is part of your saliva and digestive juices. Water helps us to swallow and move food through our digestive tract.
-  **Chemistry & Metabolism:** **Water** is needed for all the chemical reactions that keep us alive. **Water** helps your immune system so you can fight infection.
-  **Regulates Temperature:** **Water** allows our body to cool down through evaporation when we are hot and we sweat AND water stores heat to warm us up when we are cold.
-  **Removes Waste:** **Water** allows our bodies to get rid of waste

When We Don’t Have Enough Water:

We end up with a condition called **DEHYDRATION**. This means your body does not have enough **WATER** in it to keep it working right.

DEHYDRATION will cause you to:

-  Feel very thirsty. Don’t depend on thirst to tell you when you need **water**. Drink BEFORE you FEEL thirsty since you are already too low on water by the time you experience thirst.
-  Be dizzy or lightheaded or tired and possibly experience confusion.
-  Feel nauseous. If you throw up or have diarrhea you lose lots of water and it may worsen the dehydration.
-  Have dry lips and mouth. You even lose **water** when you breathe.
-  Have an elevated body temperature, you’ll get hotter. If you have a fever, you lose **water** faster through evaporation. You may feel sweaty and have a red face.
-  Feel weak and you will not be able to move as fast as usual.
-  This can lead to heat stroke.

Bernards Township Health Department

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Contractual Health Agency for:
Bernards Township
Bernardsville Borough
Chester Borough
Long Hill Township
Mendham Borough
Peapack and Gladstone Borough



How can we get enough **WATER** from our food?

- **DRINK WATER. WATER IS THE BEST DRINK.**
- Drink **water** before, during, and after you do any activity, especially if it is hot.
Beverages: Any fluid you drink will contain **water**, i.e. milk, juice, tea, sports drinks, fruits drinks, soda, soup, iced pops, etc. Soda and sugary beverages contain loads of sugar which the body does not need.
- Beverages with caffeine such as iced tea or soda make the body lose **water**.
- 20% of our **water** needs are met through food:
 - Fruit: contains a lot of water: watermelon, citrus fruits, grapes, apples, papaya, strawberries, apricots, cherries, etc.
 - Vegetables: contain a lot of water: lettuce and celery are made of 90% **water**; carrots, peppers, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, squash, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach are very high in **water**.
 - Even bread, cereals, meat and dairy products have some **water**.
 - Fats, like butter and margarine – contain the least amount of **water**.
 - Sugar and sweets: contain very little **water**.

How much should we drink?

- Cool drinks are used better by the body than warm ones.
- Some things increase your need for water:
Hot weather; Exercise, active play, sports; Altitude; Climate; Heavy/non-breathable clothes.

Water Requirements by Age:

AGE (in years)	MALE (in cups)	FEMALE (in cups)
1-3	4	4
4-8	5	5
9-13	8	7
14-18	11	8
19-50	13	9
51 and over	13	9
ATHLETES	~15.75 CUPS	~11.5 CUPS

**Adapted from 2004 National Academy of Sciences Recommendations for Total Water needs.*

Ways to get Adequate **WATER**:

1. **Drink a glass of water when you get up in the morning.**
2. **Drink water between meals with your snacks.**
3. **Take a water bottle with you when you go out to play or play sports.**
4. **Take a drink of water every fifteen minutes.**
5. **Drink water instead of soda or soft drinks.**
6. **Drink water before or after you play a game.**



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