



H(EART)2O

Getting enough water is critical for your heart health.

Keeping the body hydrated helps your heart more easily pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles. And it helps the muscles work efficiently. If you're well hydrated, your heart doesn't have to work as hard.

An American Journal of Medical Epidemiology found that people who drink five or more glasses of plain water per day have a lower risk for fatal heart disease.

Dehydration can lead to minor problems like swollen feet or a headache or can lead to more serious life-threatening illnesses like heat stroke or heart disease. Proper hydration is particularly important if you have existing heart issues or have a higher risk of heart disease.

Most healthy people can stay hydrated by drinking the recommended eight glasses of water a day. For some people, fewer than eight glasses a day might be enough. But other people might need more.

You'll want to modify your total water intake based on these factors:



EXERCISE. If you do any activity that makes you sweat, you need to drink extra water to cover the fluid loss. It's important to drink water before, during and after a workout.



ENVIRONMENT. Hot or humid weather can make you sweat and requires additional fluid. Dehydration also can occur at high altitudes.



OVERALL HEALTH. Your body loses fluids when you have a fever, vomiting or diarrhea. Drink more water or follow a doctor's recommendation to drink oral rehydration solutions. Other conditions that might require increased fluid intake include bladder infections and urinary tract stones.



PREGNANCY AND BREAST-FEEDING. If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, you may need additional fluids to stay hydrated.