

□ Drink lots of clean, safe water

Did you know that every part of your body contains large amounts of water? Because your body loses water through the day, you have to drink water every day. We can go without food for some time, but we can't go without water.

What does water do in your body?

Many parts of your body consist of water. For example:

- Tears consist mainly of water. Tears keep your eyes wet and prevent them from becoming dry.
- Water in your body keeps your skin moist and supple.
- A large part of your blood consists of water.
- Even breast milk contains lots of water.
- The water in your body moves the waste out of your body when you urinate.
- When you sweat you lose water. Sweating helps to keep your body temperature the same.



Water leaves your body through sweating and urinating. Therefore, it is important to continually 'fill up' the water in your body.



Should you only drink water or can you drink something else?

Water is the cheapest drink there is. Clean water is good for you, so you can drink as much as you want.

Milk is also a good fluid to drink. Adults should drink low-fat milk and young children full-cream milk.

Pure fruit juice is also a good fluid, but don't drink too much of it. Rather enjoy a fresh fruit.

Drink tea, coffee and fizzy drinks occasionally. They contain caffeine (a stimulant that keeps you awake) and taking too much caffeine is not healthy.

Alcohol is not a good fluid to drink. Alcohol makes the body lose its water faster.

It is more healthy to drink water rather than cold drinks, especially for children.

Sources (where we find) and safety of water

- Tap water - always make sure whether it is safe to drink.
- Water from dams, rivers, fountains and streams are not always safe to drink. Boil this water first before drinking.
- If people in your area have diarrhoea or cholera, boil all drinking water.
- Almost all fresh fruit and vegetables contain some water.
- Starchy foods, such as maize meal, rice, and samp contain more water after soaking and cooking.

Did you know?

- If you drink little water your body gets dry. We call this dehydration.
- If a child gets diarrhoea, lots of body fluids are lost fast. Give such a child the following mixture:
Mix 8 teaspoons of sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ level teaspoon of salt with 1 litre cooled down boiled water.

TIPS

- Use safe water sources. If water is from an unsafe source, boil it before use or add a few drops of bleach.
- Use clean containers to store water in.
- Store water in closed containers in a cool place
- Store drinking and cooking water in separate containers from water for washing.
- Wash fruit and vegetables in clean water to remove dirt and germs.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water before working with food and after having used the toilet.
- Make sure that children have access to clean, safe drinking water during the day. Give them a bottle of clean, safe water to take to school.



When working in the sun or doing physical work on hot days, make sure that you drink more water than usual. Every person should drink six to eight glasses of clean, safe water every day.

For more information, contact:

The Department of Health,
Directorate Nutrition,
Private bag x828,
Pretoria, 0001,
Tel 012 312 0000
Fax 012 312 3112



How much do you know?

Where do you and your family get your drinking water?

Is your drinking water clean and safe?

What do the words 'clean and safe drinking water' mean to you?

How many glasses or cups of water do you and your family drink each day?

How often do you use soap to wash your hands?