

Hydration 101

Healthy Aging

You Are What You Drink

Water accounts for approximately **50% of older adults' body weight**

and is an essential nutrient. Water plays a role in many vital processes throughout the body, including:

Structure & Cushioning. Temperature Regulation. Lubrication.
Metabolism & Digestion. Cardiovascular Function.¹

Do You Drink Enough?

Fluid recommendations may vary depending on factors such as age, gender, and level of activity

OLDER MEN
2.5L
per day

< Recommended daily total intake of fluid for adults - food and beverages both contribute.¹ >

OLDER WOMEN
2L
per day

Eat H₂O Rich Foods

The food we eat is also part of the hydration equation and normally adds 20% - 30% to our total fluid intake.^{1,2}

Water content of food varies* and can be as high as the following³:



60%

Beef, Chicken & Pork



80%

Eggs



95%

Fruits & Vegetables



50%

Cheeses



80%

Fish & Seafood



40%

Breads

*Depending on how these foods are eaten and any potential cooking method, these values may change.

Older Adults are More at Risk⁴

Sedentary adults can lose approximately 2-3L of water per day through sweating, urination and breathing. Altitude, air temperature, and humidity also play a role⁵.

The effects of dehydration can start at 1-2% body weight loss¹.



Dry mouth, lips, and eyes



Dizziness & lightheadedness



Increased body temperature



Fatigue



Headache



Loss of appetite

Hydration and Healthy Aging

Older adults are more susceptible to dehydration because of the following risk factors^{6,7}:

Reduced thirst sensation

This leads to a decrease in fluid consumption.^{6,7}

Decreased body water stores

As you age, the loss of muscle mass lowers body water content, making it even more important to be vigilant about maintaining hydration⁸

Kidneys are less able to concentrate urine

Aging kidneys struggle to retain water⁹

Disease and medicinal related factors

Diabetes, fever, cognitive status and use of certain medications (such as diuretics and corticosteroids), can compromise hydration levels^{6,8}

Helping to Develop Daily Hydration Habits

Establishing prompts for regular drinking is key for maintaining adequate hydration



Ensure preferred drinks are available all day, within reach of the bedside or chairside



Encourage plenty of fluids with medications



Think about adaptations that might be needed to make drinking accessible (i.e., small bottles of water, straws, fluid thickeners)



Set a timer to encourage drinking regularly



Balancing Hydration

Not too much nor too little

Hyponatremia (low sodium levels in the blood) is especially common in older adults.¹⁰ This increased predisposition to hyponatremia is due to the disruption of sodium and water balance caused by normal aging.¹¹



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