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## Stay Healthy, Drink Water

Most people know the importance of drinking a lot of water during the spring and summer. It is important to drink plenty of water during the fall and winter as well. Hot and dry air can dehydrate you in the summer time, but did you know dry cooler weather can dehydrate you too? Before talking about how much water your body needs, we need to address some myths around hydration.

*Myth:* Dehydration is not dangerous, just uncomfortable

**Fact:** Extreme dehydration can be deadly. Most dehydration is mild. Mild dehydration is characterized by headaches, feeling sluggish, decreased sweat and urine. If not treated, mild dehydration can become severe quickly. Young children and elderly are the most vulnerable.



Source: ScienceNews.org

*Myth:* Everyone needs to drink 8 glasses of water a day

**Fact:** This used to be a general rule, but now it is outdated. Current research points to drinking about half of your body weight in ounces a day. For example, a 140-pound person should try to drink 70 ounces of water a day.

*Myth:* You are dehydrated if you are thirsty

**Fact:** Being thirsty is your body's way of telling you to drink water. You can feel thirsty if you are dehydrated. Often times, we are thirsty when we are hydrated and starting to need a little water.

*Myth:* There is no such thing as too much water

**Fact:** Overhydration is rare but dangerous. You have to drink a lot of water to overhydrate. If you are worried about overhydrating, do not drink to the point where you feel full from water alone.

*Myth:* Coffee dehydrates you

**Fact:** It depends. Caffeine is dehydrating, but the water used to brew coffee makes up for the effects of the caffeine. There is a point where the caffeine is greater than the water, around 500 or more milligrams in a day.

### *Why Stay Hydrated When It Is Cooler?*

Staying hydrated when it is cooler outside has a number of health benefits. First, staying hydrated helps your body maintain a healthy temperature. In the colder weather, staying hydrated will make you feel warmer. Second, staying hydrated will help your skin from drying out and becoming chapped. Finally, drinking enough water to stay hydrated helps you maintain your current weight. When your body is properly hydrated, it is more likely to break down unwanted fat while keeping your digestive system functioning properly.

### *How to Stay Hydrated in the Cooler Months*

There are many ways to stay hydrated in the cooler months. If you have a system to keep hydrated in the summer, try using it in the fall and winter. For people who do not have a system, make drinking water convenient. I carry a reusable water bottle around with me or have one somewhere close by. If keeping track of how much you drink a day is an issue, try keeping a journal. By keeping a water journal, you will be more mindful of needing to drink and how much you have had in the day. Finally, if you are one of the many people who do not like drinking water for the sake of drinking water, try changing it up. Add cut up fruits or vegetables to your water, get some 100% fruit juice extract and add a little to each glass, or eat soup with a high broth/water content. The trick is to find a way that works for you without adding sugar.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact Tyler Johnson, [tajohnson120@ksu.edu](mailto:tajohnson120@ksu.edu), or by calling 620-232-1930.

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