

## Staying Hydrated

*From the desk of Volunteer, Michelle Kelly RDN, LD*

Summer is upon on so many of us may spend more time outdoors. It is important to remember whether you're playing sports, traveling, or watching your kids or grandkids playing you need to make sure you are hydrated.

### **Water is important for heart health.**

When you are hydrated you make it easier for your heart to pump blood through the blood vessels to the muscles. When you are dehydrated it can lead to conditions such as swollen feet or a headache or even more life-threatening conditions like heat stroke.

### **How much water do I need?**

The amount of water an individual needs varies based on climatic conditions, clothing worn as well as exercise intensity and duration. How much you perspires also plays a part in the amount of water you need. Certain medical conditions or medications may also have an effect on how much water you need. Discuss your hydration needs with a medical provider who knows your complete medical history. A quick way to know if you are dehydrated is to check the color of your urine. Generally, if your urine isn't pale or clear that is an indication that you could be dehydrated.

### **Water: Why it is good for you**

Water provides many benefits for your body

- Regulates body temperature
- Lubricates joints
- Lessens the burden on the kidneys and liver by flushing out waste products
- Carries nutrients and oxygen to the cells
- Prevents constipation
- Protects organs and tissue
- Dissolves nutrients to make them accessible to the body

### **What counts as water?**

Water from the tap doesn't have to be your only source. There are many food sources you can incorporate that will also help keep you hydrated.

- Fruits (Watermelon, oranges, grapefruit, cantaloupe, and honeydew)
- Vegetables (Celery, cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, and Romaine lettuce)
- Milk
- Oatmeal, yogurt, soup, or smoothies
- Coffee and tea

You can also consider sprucing up tap water by adding lemon or orange slices, strawberries or raspberries, mint leaves, or grapes. Be creative and stay hydrated!

Resources: American Heart Association @ <http://www.heart.org>  
Nutrition 411 @ <http://www.nutrition411.com/content/water-why-it-good-you>  
<http://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/healthy-beverages>

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Thank you!

**Questions?** If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email [lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org](mailto:lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org).

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