

# Drink Up!

*Nutrition Notes by Natalie*

Believe it or not, Fall does not officially begin until Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> which means the majority of September is still considered summer. Consuming enough liquids, especially in these warmer months, is crucial for many reasons. Proper hydration improves cognition, mood, and quality of sleep. Did you know it also helps prevent infections, keeps organs functioning properly, lubricates our joints, and helps deliver nutrients to our cells? With age, however, the mechanisms responsible for signaling the body that we need fluid diminishes, so we must become intentional and plan our daily intake. In fact, if you are feeling thirsty that is usually a sign that your body is already dehydrated!

On average, an adult needs to consume a minimum of eight cups of fluid daily. If you exercise, have a fever, or are out on hot days it's even more. It really does sound pretty straightforward but most people rarely meet their recommended daily intake.

Most of your fluid needs are met through the water and beverages you drink but you can also get fluid through some of the foods you eat, especially fruits and vegetables. Water is the best source of hydration, but people struggle to drink enough of this flavorless drink. In fact, in the United States, plain water intake is lowest in the older adult population. Here are some simple tips to improve your overall water consumption:



- Drink from a straw
- Carry a 32 ounce container and fill it twice a day with water
- Set a timer and drink 8 ounces every hour from breakfast to dinner

Of course there are many other beverage options besides water that can be included as part of a healthy diet. Plain coffee or teas, sparkling water or seltzer, and flavored waters are also low calorie acceptable choices. Low fat or fat free milk,

fortified milk alternatives, and 100% fruit juice can be consumed as well although these are not calorie free so they should be enjoyed within recommended calorie limits. Regular soda, fruit and sports drinks, and sweetened teas and coffees have little nutritional benefit and should be limited. Here are a few creative ways to make drinking water a little more interesting:

## ***Start with 5 cups of water and 1 cup of ice cubes***

<b><i>Then add.....</i></b>	
Strawberry Basil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup sliced, fresh or frozen strawberries</li> <li>• 5 large basil leaves</li> <li>• 1 lemon thinly sliced</li> </ul>
Cucumber Mint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup honeydew cubes</li> <li>• 1 cucumber thinly sliced</li> <li>• 10 fresh mint leaves</li> </ul>
Berry Orange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ pint blackberries</li> <li>• 1 orange thinly sliced</li> <li>• 1 (2-inch) piece of fresh ginger peeled and thinly sliced</li> </ul>
Pina Colada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup pineapple chunks, fresh or frozen</li> <li>• 1 lime thinly sliced, frozen</li> <li>• 1 cup coconut chunks, fresh or frozen</li> </ul>
Pinky Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup watermelon cubes</li> <li>• 1 kiwi diced or cut into circles</li> <li>• 1 lime sliced into circles</li> </ul>
Mint Grapefruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 grapefruit thinly sliced</li> <li>• ½ cup pomegranate seeds</li> <li>• 10 fresh mint leaves</li> </ul>