

How fluids can help.....

You should always be aware of the warning signs of dehydration, which are gradual and progressive. They include:

- Thirst
- Dizziness
- Intolerance to cold
- Fatigue
- weakness

It is important if you have any of these signs to hydrate with plenty of fluids. If you have not been able to eat or drink anything for 24hrs, inform your provider. You may experience a variety of discomforts while pregnant, such as constipation, heartburn or fluid retention.

Constipation: You may experience a natural slowing of your digestive tract, which can lead to constipation. It's important to eat fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes, and to drink plenty of water. Some women get relief prunes and figs.

Heartburn: Caffeine can cause heartburn as can too much food. If you suffer from heartburn, try avoiding caffeinated foods like chocolate and coffee and avoid overeating.

Fluid retention: During pregnancy, hormones change the way women store water. Moderate swelling in the ankles, hands and wrists is to be expected in pregnancy. Experts recommend drinking more, rather than less, water to help reduce fluid retention and maintain normal body functions for electrolyte and fluid balance.

Amniotic fluid: A great deal of water is used in the amniotic sac. Amniotic fluid needs to replenish itself every hour by using roughly a cup of water stored in the mother's body. Drinking adequate amounts of water will help insure the unborn baby is protected in the womb.

Dehydration: The primary reason to drink water is to keep the body hydrated. Dehydration in pregnant women can be very serious, even causing premature labor. Premature labor is often stopped just by giving the mother enough hydrating fluids like water to rehydrate her body.

Skin: Drinking enough water will help keep your skin healthier and also helps to prevent acne.

Urinary Tract Infections: UTI's are the number one cause of preterm labor. If you drink enough water, your urine will stay diluted, reducing your risk of infection and preterm labor.

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Water for Mom and Baby

*The facts you
need to know.....*

Congratulations on having a baby!

Proper nutrition during pregnancy or while breastfeeding is an everyday challenge. Eating properly can have profound effects on you and your baby. Although you may already know what to eat, you may not think of water as a nutrient. But water is essential for good health - both yours and your baby.

Water plays many vital roles in a healthy pregnancy. Think of water as your body's transportation system - it carries nutrients through your blood to the baby. Water also helps prevent bladder infections, which are common during pregnancy and can cause preterm labor.

With this common sense approach, you will receive practical ideas for getting enough of the fluids you need, especially with water. If water sounds tasteless and boring to you, there is good news. Adding a little lemon juice, wedge of lemon or wedge of lime to water can help you enjoy more of a good thing - and perhaps settle your stomach if you feel a little queasy.

Tip:

Here's an easy way to tell if you're getting enough fluids. Check your urine. If it is dark and scant rather than clear and plentiful, you need to drink more!

How much is enough?

During pregnancy, your blood's volume can increase up to 50 percent. Add heightened metabolism, production of amniotic fluid and other bodily changes, and you can see why you need more fluids. While pregnant or breastfeeding, it is absolutely essential that you meet your daily requirement of **8-12 cups of fluid a day** - or more if you are thirsty. Keep in mind that smaller women might need a little less fluid, while larger women and those expecting multiple births or living in a warmer climate might need a little more.

Do you feel thirsty?

Thirst is an important regulator of fluid intake. When your body's fluid levels are low, your blood concentrates and fluid is drawn from the salivary glands into the bloodstream. The result: your mouth feels dry, which prompts you to drink. By the time your mouth is dry, you've probably lost two or more cups of your total body water. Excessive thirst, or drinking a lot of water and still feeling thirsty, may be signs of gestational diabetes. Be sure to speak to your provider if this is happening.

Remember:

You can never drink too many fluids during your pregnancy. Water is one of the most essential nutrients for you and your baby.

Water.... It's your best bet!

Because water is naturally low in sodium, has no fat, cholesterol or caffeine, and is quickly absorbed by your body, it should be your top choice in helping you reach your daily fluid quota.

Milk and 100 percent fruit juices are good choices too since they supple other nutrients besides water. They should count toward part of your daily goal. Foods high in water like fruits and vegetables (especially melons, citrus fruits and salad greens) can also help.

Limit your intake of caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea and certain carbonated sodas that can have a diuretic effect. And avoid beer, wine and liquor all together.

Why are fluids so important?

Water makes up 55-75 percent of adult body weight-that's about 10-12 gallons - so it's no wonder that it is an essential nutrient that must be consumed daily. All body tissues - blood, lean muscle, body fat and bones, contain water. Even a tiny water deficit, such as losing 2-5 percent of your water weight, can affect your well-being, especially during pregnancy or breastfeeding.