

Nutrition and Spinecare

The Role of Water in Health

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Water is important for all bodily functions. It moves nutrients, hormones, antibodies, & oxygen through the blood stream & lymphatic system. Water is second only to oxygen as an essential element for life. Approximately 2/3 of the body weight is water. Everyday, the average adult needs to replace 2-2 1/2 quarts of water to replenish fluids which are lost through urination, the gastrointestinal tract and through perspiration.

A non-active person requires approximately 1/2 ounce of water per pound of body weight per day. For the average adult who weighs 160 pounds, this comes out to about ten 8-ounce glasses of water per day. The more you exercise, the more water you need. Spread out your water intake throughout the day. Do not drink more than 4 glasses within any given hour. If you don't consume adequate quantities of water, most functions of the body will suffer. Our energy level is greatly affected by the amount of water we drink. Studies have shown that as little as a 5% drop in body fluids can lead to significant fatigue and lethargy.

In just the last decade the medical field has begun to pay more attention to the importance of water. Every process that occurs within our body requires water. It helps regulate our body temperature through perspiration, which dissipates excess heat & cools our bodies. Adequate hydration is critical for the health and function of bones and muscles including the tissues of the spine. It even helps to lubricate our joints. The cartilage tissues found at the ends of long bones & between the vertebrae of the spine hold water with the help of special water binding chemicals. This process serves to help lubricate the joint surfaces allowing for better joint movement. When cartilage is well hydrated, two opposing joint surfaces glide freely, & friction damage is minimal. If the cartilage is dehydrated, the rate of "abrasive" damage is increased, resulting in joint wear and tear.

Rheumatoid joint pain frequently decreases with increased water intake & flexing exercises to bring more circulation to the joints. Water helps provide weight bearing potential to the tissues of the spine. For example, about 75% of the upper body weight is supported by the spine including the intervertebral discs. About 70% of the healthy adult disc is comprised of water, most of which is in the gel-like center of the disc. The integrity and function of the spinal joints are dependent on water moving into and out of the center of the disc.