

Only people who know me well (and, of course, now all of you) know that I am a Beach Boys fan. In addition to their style, I loved the themes they included in their song lyrics. Beaches, sun, friends, having fun, and... all things water! This article brings to mind these lyrics: "*When the heat's got you down- Here's what you ought- Get yourself in that cool, cool water*" from their song "Cool, Cool Water."

During these summer months, we try to find ways to have fun and enjoy spending time with family and friends. The sun shines brighter and hotter which drains our body of its water supply. As the Beach Boys lyrics say, we need to 'get ourselves in that cool, cool water' to make sure our bodies stay both hydrated and healthy.

Why is water so important? Our adult body weight is made up of 55-75% water and the percentage is even higher for children. For adults, this equates to about 10 – 12 gallons of water (which varies from person to person.) Water is critical to the functioning of our bodies. It helps our body transport nutrients through our blood. It helps our blood remove waste products from the body. Water is found in the linings of body organs and in the fluids that surround our body's organs. It is found in our joints, as well. This allows our body to move more easily. In our digestive system, water helps break down certain foods and transport it through the system. Water helps control our body's temperature which must stay within a very narrow range. It does this internally by storing heat as needed, as well as externally through perspiration to help cool our body from the outside. There are so many more purposes for water in our body, as well. Barbara Ames of the Wildcat K-State Research and Extension district has written an excellent resource about the functions and importance of water in our diet in her publication *Liquid Assets: The Value of Fluids to Your Health* which can be found online at <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/mf2739.pdf>.

It is easy, in the midst of summer activities and crazy schedules, to neglect our water consumption. Before we know it, we feel parched and start searching for a way to quench our thirst. Being thirsty is one of the first indications of mild to moderate dehydration. Your daily consumption of water will vary based on how active you are, the status of your health and where you live. The Institute of Medicine identifies that adequate intake for men is about 100 ounces or 13 cups. For women, the Institute recommends 73 ounces or 9 cups of fluid each day. For most adults, 80% of our water consumption needs are met by drinking water and caffeinated beverages, while 20% comes from the food we eat.

What are the best choices for keeping the body hydrated? You know the answer... WATER! It is the easiest liquid for the body to absorb. Cool water absorbs better than warm, hot, or ice water. Other good fluid sources include milk, fruit juice, fruits and

vegetables, soups, and broths. These foods have the added benefit of providing additional nutritive value to the fluids your body needs.

Be cautious of consuming large amounts of sports drinks, energy drinks, soda, and other carbonated beverages that typically have large amounts of sugar contained in them. Sugary drinks pull the fluid out of your stomach and intestines and can lead to gastric distress. These drinks also add significantly to your daily calorie intake. Water has no caloric content which contributes to why it is the best choice for beverage consumption.

Bottled water is another safe and reliable source of liquid in our diet. The availability of bottled water has increased significantly over the past several years. Not surprisingly, Americans spend billions of dollars each year on bottled water. What you may not know is that the bottled water industry is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It must meet specific standards of identity and quality for bottled water and manufacturing practices for processing and bottling. The FDA relies on state and local government to approve water sources. The International Bottled Water Association reports that about 98.5% of all bottled water sold in the U.S. is sourced domestically. Some states may add additional regulations for bottled water, as well.

Again, our summer months lend themselves well for outside summer fun. Our picnics and barbeque events often offer beer or other alcoholic beverages as drink alternatives. To reduce the risk of dehydration, alternate drinks between those that contain alcohol and those that don't. Alcohol is a powerful diuretic – meaning that it causes your body to rid itself of water and sodium. That's why drinking alcohol can significantly contribute to dehydration.

Kick back, enjoy summer, eat well, and drink lots of that 'cool, cool water'. For more information on healthy living, contact me at the Geary County Extension office (785) 238-4161. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!

Sidebar:

Symptoms of Mild to Moderate Dehydration

- Thirst
- Dry, sticky mouth
- Headache
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Decreased urine output

- Tiredness or sleepiness
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

Symptoms of Severe Dehydration (seek medical help)

- Extreme thirst
- Sunken eyes
- Very dry mouth, skin
- Irritability and confusion in adults
- Little or no urination
- Shriveled and dry skin that doesn't readily smooth out when pinched into a fold

Healthy adults can bounce back from mild to moderate dehydration by simply drinking more fluids, but older adults, infants, and children often need medical attention. If a child or elderly person develops severe diarrhea, a bloody stool, can't keep liquids down, is disoriented or listless, you need to seek emergency medical care. Source: www.mayoclinic.org