



Our body weight consists of around 65% water and most of this is contained within our cells. Water is the most important macronutrient. We can live for around 8 weeks without food, but only a few days without water! A 12% drop in bodyweight through lost water is always fatal.

So water is vital and very important in life!!!

Exercise and hydration

When we exercise around 75% of energy is released as heat, which is why you get hot during exercise. This heat has to be dissipated in order to keep your core temperature around 37°C, and this is done by flushing the skin with water via the small blood vessels under the skin, they evaporate from the surface of the body, taking with it heat.

The amount you sweat depends on:

- How hard you exercise.
- How long you exercise for.
- The environment conditions.
- Your individual body chemistry.

Some people sweat more than others; this can depend upon body size, fitness levels, acclimatization and individual factors. Women tend to sweat less than men, as they are genetically more efficient at fluid retention. During one hour of normal exercise, the average person could be expected to lose around 1 Litre of fluid.

Thirst is a response to dehydration, hence by the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated. Check your hydration by checking your urine; it should always be pale yellow.

If you experience some of these symptoms: sluggishness, fatigue and loss of appetite, headaches, feeling excessively hot, light headedness and nausea- start drinking immediately as you are dehydrated and your body is in need of fluid.

It is recommended that we drink approximately 1.2 Litres (6-8 glasses) a day.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a drug that has the immediate effect of altering mood. Drinking it makes people feel relaxed, happy and even overjoyed, but in fact alcohol is a depressant. It switches off the part of the brain that controls judgment, leading to loss of inhibitions. Drinking even small amounts of alcohol can affect physical coordination. Alcohol consumed in moderation is thought to help reduce the risk of heart disease.

Drinking too much alcohol however is not without risk, not only will it leave you with a hangover the next day, but binge drinking and/or drinking more than the recommended intake on a regular basis can also cause long-term damage to the body's internal organs.

Chronic alcohol use is one of the major causes of liver cirrhosis (irreversible scarring of the liver). This happens because healthy liver cells die and the dead cells are replaced by fibrous tissue.

1 gram of alcohol contains 7 kcals so it is important that you recognise alcohol as a source of calories. The calories in alcohol are metabolized first by the body, ahead of burning fat - which is not desirable if on a weight loss diet.

Alcoholic drink

Amount

Kcals

Food equivalent

Baileys 37 ml 1291 choc ice

Beer/ bitter, canned 1 pint 182A glazed ring doughnut

Cider, strong 1 pint 239 Beans on toast

Champagne, average 120ml 891 chocolate biscuit

Alcopop 330ml 20050g block of cheddar cheese

Premium lager 1 pint 3302 mini pork pies

Guinness/stout 1 pint 175A chicken drumstick

Wine, white, medium 175 ml

250ml 130

185A small bag of crisps

4 fish fingers

Red wine 175ml 120 Small slice of sponge cake

Vodka or gin 40% volume 25 ml 5525ml serving of single cream

Alcohol promotes water loss. In addition minerals like magnesium, potassium, calcium and zinc, which are not only important nutrients but are also involved in the

maintenance of fluid balance and nerve and muscle action. These minerals also help to keep the heart beating and dangerous cardiac arrhythmias can occur after heavy drinking.

The department of health advises that men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units of alcohol per day and women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units of alcohol.

1x 25 ml of sprits= 1 unit

1x half pint of lager/ beer= 1 unit 1x small glass of wine= 1 unit

It can depend on the strength of the alcohol; many bottled drinks will tell you how many units of alcohol are in the bottle.