



# 5 surprising signs you may be dehydrated *and what to do about it.*

with Pam Mathis, Functional Dietitian/Nutritionist

Are you drinking enough? With summer heating up, you may be surprised by how many of your symptoms may be caused by dehydration. The signs may not be obvious, like intense thirst or feeling faint, but mild to moderate dehydration can be the root cause of some very common complaints. The CDC has reported that 30% of older Americans are clinically dehydrated.

## Common symptoms of mild to moderate dehydration include:

1. **Fatigue.** Did you know that the leading cause of fatigue is actually dehydration?
2. **Constipation** from lack of water through the digestion process.
3. **Foot and leg cramps** from electrolyte imbalances when sweating profusely.
4. **Dizziness** from changes in blood pressure and electrolytes due to dehydration.
5. **Headaches.** Just a 1.5% reduction in hydration can cause headaches, including migraine headaches.

## So, how much hydration is enough?

The answer depends on many factors, including your age, weight, temperature and humidity where you live, your health conditions, medications, activity level, and how much you sweat.

Water makes up about 60% of your body and is required for hundreds of bodily functions like digestion, brain function, maintaining healthy skin, and regulation of temperature, hunger, weight, blood pressure, heart function, electrolyte balance, and so much more.

The general recommendations from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine are for women to drink 11.5 cups a day and men to drink 15.5 cups a day. So much for the 8 glasses a day rule! Aim to drink enough fluids so your urine is a pale straw color. If it's a darker yellow, keep drinking.

And remember that soda, alcohol, and caffeine are not hydrating. You can, however, assume that about 20% of your fluids will come from foods like fruits and vegetables and roughly 80% from drinking fluids.



## Make staying hydrated more fun and tasty with these tips (they're not what you expect!)

- 1. Add flavor to your water.** Infused waters are delicious and can infuse not only flavor, but also vitamins and antioxidants into your water. Try adding slices of cucumber, watermelon, strawberries, lemon, lime, oranges, or kiwi for an extra boost of nutrition. Or look for ready to drink flavored waters like Waterdrop, Hint, LaCroix, AHA water, or Bubly.
- 2. Try a new beverage.** Something new and tasty can inspire you to drink more. These options offer nutritional value as well, like a greens drink (my favorite is Amazing Grass Green Superfood in chocolate), kombucha, herbal tea, Vital Proteins collagen water or Wanu water.
- 3. Consider an electrolyte enhanced water** if you are sweating profusely, or have diarrhea or vomiting. (Always contact your Medical Practitioner if you are ill.) Electrolytes may need to be replaced if you are sweating and/or doing vigorous activities for more than 1 hour by drinking water with Nuun Sport tablets, BodyBio E-Lyte drinks, Ultima Replenisher Electrolyte Hydration powder, or Designs for Health Electrolyte Synergy.
- 4. Get a fun and easy-to-carry water bottle with your favorite logo or design on it.** Look for BPA free bottles (stainless is my favorite) and a lid that is easy to clean. Carrying your new sassy water bottle will make drinking more fun!
- 5. Keep track of your ounces by using fun counters** like poker chips, colored stickers on your calendar, a tracking app like WaterBalance, or your Apple watch.

### Need some support with feeling hydrated, healthy and back in balance?

I'm Pam Mathis, a Functional Dietitian/Nutritionist,  
and it's my mission to help you take back your health.

I'm here to help you

- **feel better than you have in years** with renewed energy and vitality.
- **be more in control of your choices** and feel more balance in your life.
- **know what to eat and how to navigate vacations and events** without losing a healthy mindset.

**Connect with me for a consultation**  
**at 941-907-3757 or [pam@nutritioncoachpam.com](mailto:pam@nutritioncoachpam.com).**

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