

# Get Hydrated!

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Do you get the mid-day munchies? Are you exhausted by 2 p.m.? Then get yourself a glass of water—you may be dehydrated!

## Benefits of good hydration:

- dissolves nutrients; breaks down food;
- lubricates your joints;
- keeps you regular;
- quenches thirst;
- helps regulate blood pressure;
- helps maintain a good complexion;
- maintains normal body temperature;
- supports wellness and prevents illness.

We lose fluid by sweating, breathing and removing waste from our bodies. Dehydration is the loss of water and electrolytes (sodium and potassium), which are needed for normal body function. It is said that if you experience even a small amount of thirst then you are already dehydrated. Other early signs of dehydration include tiredness, irritability, headache, dizziness, dry lips, depression, confusion, and strong smelling urine. Over time, chronic dehydration can lead to a change in mental status, increase in falls, constipation,

poor wound healing, urinary tract infections, seizures, and in extreme cases death. As you can see, water is very important!

So how much should we be drinking? Men 19 years or older require 12 cups of fluid per day, while women of the same age require nine cups. It is best to sip your fluids throughout the day, as opposed to drinking them all at once.

## You may need more fluid if:

- you are at a high elevation;
- the environment is dry;
- you are active;
- you are pregnant or breastfeeding;
- you are in a hot climate;
- you are using diuretics, laxatives, or alcohol;
- you are sick—especially with vomiting and diarrhea.

Although water is definitely the “gold standard” when it comes to hydration, all fluids can fit—so drink up! Milk, water, juice, and soups can all hydrate you (just watch out for extra calories). Caffeinated beverages, such as coffee and tea, used

to be “shunned” from the hydrating fluid list as it was believed they had a diuretic effect. However, these beverages can now be counted towards your daily fluid requirements. Just don’t go overboard! Drink water, too.

As we get older, our thirst mechanism is reduced. This can increase the risk of dehydration. Older people must remember to drink throughout the day, even if they aren’t thirsty, to maintain good hydration.

## Energy Drinks

There has been an excessive use of energy drinks over the past few years in Canada and the rest of North America. These drinks contain sugar, water, caffeine, and taurine (an amino acid). Not only are they poor hydrators, they could be dangerous, depending on their use and your health status. If you drink too many you may be in for trouble.

Not all energy drinks are regulated, and some adverse effects have been reported in Canada (but note that negative effects were only seen when guidelines were not followed).

Energy drinks should **NEVER EVER** be given to children.



If you choose to consume energy drinks, follow the recommendations on the can. Best advice – get a good night’s sleep, eat well, exercise, and live a healthy lifestyle. Then you won’t need energy drinks to get through the day!

## Should you be drinking sports drinks?

Sports drinks are made with a balance of sugar, sodium and potassium (electrolytes), and are used to replenish the body after extreme activity.

It is not necessary to consume a sports drink after less than one hour of activity. Water is best. The body does not lose enough electrolytes before one hour of activity to merit the extra sugar and calories in a sports drink. So save yourself a few dollars and grab a good old glass of H<sub>2</sub>O!

We can live weeks without food, but only a few days without water.

## did you KNOW?

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) invites NSTU members to sign up for our Wellness email list at **Be\_Well@nstu.ca**.

Please contact Erin at ekeefe@staff.nstu.ca to provide her with your NSTU email address. The **Be\_Well@nstu.ca** list will provide information about the EIP and other wellness topics.

