

August 1, 2014



# Share the Wellness Tip

## Just Add Water

It's summer, which means time for outdoor fun. It's also the time of year when it's easy to become dehydrated. Warmer temperatures, higher humidity and increased physical activity cause you to perspire more. These fluids need to be replaced throughout the day to keep your body in balance.

Most people get enough water through normal drinking behavior and through the water in foods such as soups, fruits and vegetables. But you need to drink more when the heat rises.

However, too much fluid in your body can make it harder for your heart to pump. Many doctors advise heart failure patients to drink eight cups, or 64 ounces, of fluid a day. If your doctor recommends that you restrict your fluid intake, there are simple ways to dodge thirst without exceeding your drink limit:

- ✈️ Space your fluid intake throughout the day. When you drink, take small sips. Water is a good choice for staying hydrated — and it's calorie-free. Add a slice of lemon or flavored seltzer for taste.
- ✈️ Mark the amount of liquid you are limited to each day on an empty container. As you drink fluids, put an equal amount of water into the container until you reach the limit. This helps you know when to stop drinking for that day.
- ✈️ Remember that some fruits and vegetables have high water content so include these foods when keeping track of your fluid intake. For example, eating one medium orange or a half cup of watermelon is the same as drinking a half cup of liquid.
- ✈️ Find alternate ways to relieve thirst. Try chewing gum, sucking on sugar-free hard candy, rinsing your mouth with water or sucking on ice chips (not cubes). Also, you can nibble on frozen grapes, blueberries, strawberries or a washcloth soaked in ice-cold water. Avoid milk or ice cream products because they increase thirst.

**And everyone, not just those watching their fluid intake, can stay hydrated this summer with these two tips:**

- ✈️ Limit sodium. In addition to increasing thirst, sodium causes your body to retain fluid, which can cause swelling and weight gain.
- ✈️ Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Alcohol can decrease the heart's ability to contract properly and caffeine can put additional stress on the heart.

**Sources:** *United States Department of Agriculture; Mayo Clinic*

