

# KEY TIPS ON HYDRATION

## HOW VARIETY CAN HELP HYDRATION

It is calculated that of the total water consumed, about

**20 -30%**

typically comes from food  
and about

**70-80%**

from beverages

(all types, not just plain water)<sup>1,2</sup>

However, this may vary greatly  
depending of the diet that an individual  
chooses.<sup>1,2</sup>



**Given the particular importance of beverages in ensuring  
our hydration, it is important to know that:**

- Plain water is a significant source of liquid intake for most people, but many beverages like juices, milk, soft drinks, coffee and tea are more than 85% water and are therefore an important source of water.
- In addition to thirst, habit is very important in determining what and when we drink.
- Having available a variety of beverages may result in people drinking up to 50% more liquids than if only water was available, as shown in a study of fluid intake of runners on a treadmill.<sup>3</sup>
- The pleasant taste of beverages is the reason why many people choose to drink beverages like soft drinks, tea, milk, etc. instead of plain water.
- All non-alcoholic beverages and some weak alcoholic beverages hydrate and contribute to an adequate hydration, including those containing caffeine such as coffee, tea and some soft drinks.
- The role of variety in hydration has been recognised by International organisations such as the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI)<sup>4</sup> and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)<sup>2</sup> and it is particularly important for population groups that may be vulnerable to dehydration including children and elderly people.
- EFSA adequate intake advice for water relates to water from all sources in the diet (including plain water, food and beverages).<sup>2</sup>

Please see our website to know more about the contents of water of different foods and drinks:  
[www.europeanhydrationinstitute.org/hydration\\_and\\_nutrition.html](http://www.europeanhydrationinstitute.org/hydration_and_nutrition.html)

A variety of sources, colours and tastes is important towards achieving the necessary liquid intake for optimal hydration and to meeting nutritional needs.



## Including different beverages in the diet can also provide other benefits:

For example:

- Many beverages provide important nutrients such as vitamins, antioxidants and electrolytes that contribute to our daily needs.
- Fruit juices can contribute to the five portions of fruit and vegetables that we are recommended to consume each day.
- Sport drinks contain small amounts of sugar and electrolytes that help to reduce water, mineral and energy imbalance due to physical exertion.
- Caffeinated drinks such as coffee can provide a stimulus when tired.

Although a variety of beverages contributes to hydration, it is important to take into account that unlike plain water, beverages often contain calories and therefore they contribute to the daily energy intake. The wide variety of low-calorie and no-calorie drinks available nowadays helps to reduce this contribution. Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) are available in most countries to help people to make informed choices about the products they buy.

1. Manz F, Johner SA, Wentz A, Boeing H, Remer T. Water balance throughout the adult lifespan in a German population. *Br J Nutr* 2011; 115: 1-9 [Epub ahead of print] 2. EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition, and Allergies (NDA); Scientific Opinion on Dietary reference values for water. *EFSA Journal* 2010; 8(3):1459. Available online: <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/1459.htm> 3. López-Román J, Martínez González A, Luque A, Villegas García JA. Estudio comparativo de diferentes procedimientos de hidratación durante un ejercicio de larga duración. *Archivos de Medicina del Deporte* 2008; 25(123): 435-441. 4. ILSI Scientific Consensus Statement regarding the Importance of Hydration and Total Water Intake for Health and Disease. *J. Am Coll Nutr* 2007; 26(S): 529-623.