# HYDRATION: Why should you stay well-hydrated?

Water is the fifth macronutrient besides fats, protein, carbs, and fiber. Of course, it isn't considered a macronutrient classically, but I classify it to underline how important it is. Water doesn't give you any calories but is still extremely important for your metabolism. Most of us go around a little dehydrated over our days. That's why we've dedicated a particular part for hydration.

Water has so many functions in our body, but we'll go over now the most important one that you should know.

1. Water is a transportation medium - in blood, in tissue, and in cells. That’s why our body can’t function 100% when dehydrated.
2. Water is an environment where chemical processes in our body take place. Every single process in our body needs water to function.

There are significant problems with dehydration. When we’re dehydrated, even a little bit, our physical and cognitive performance goes down. It means we won't move as much, give in to temptation and binging, feel more tired, sleepless, and so on. One interesting symptom of dehydration for lots of people is feeling more hungry when dehydrated. In those cases, our body interprets this signal wrong and we overeat when we just should have had a cup of water.

Because of those reasons, being well hydrated is very important to support our metabolism.

Where to get this water? The most important thing to remember is to get our hydration water from non-caloric or low-calorie drinks. For example, we should never hydrate ourselves with sugary drinks like Coca Cola, a cappuccino, smoothies, or beer. Of course, we get some of our water from different foods, which is fine, but it is very rarely enough. So the best source of water is - water! Just pure tap water. Even better - mineral water if you don't mind the extra cost. You can quickly get your water with BCAA and other non-caloric sport-drinks. They're especially welcome to those that can't get pure water to go down.

What other sources are there? In the western world, we obviously drink a lot of coffee, which is fine, as long it isn’t too strong and we don’t add sugar or too much milk/cream. Even better would be tea. Some people like to drink sugarless fruit soups that go well with different foods. There are many possibilities, but remember to drink your liquids without extra calories.

How much is enough? That is quite a complicated question because it depends on many things. But the main principle is rather to be overhydrated than under. For most of us, it is 1.5-2 liters or about half a gallon of water in addition to food. People who are more physically active, or sweat more, would probably need 3 liters or closer to one gallon of water a day, or more. The best way to know if you are getting enough water is to drink so much that your urine is light yellow and you go to the restroom rather more often than usual than more seldomly. In that case, you are well hydrated.

Although water doesn’t contain calories, it doesn’t mean it is less important than other macronutrients. Keeping yourself well-hydrated boosts your performance, metabolic processes, keeps your hunger at bay, and adds to your overall health. Get your water from low or non-caloric sources and remember that being a little overhydrated is much better than being a little under-hydrated.