



# SHIFT BRIEFING



## HYDRATION BEST PRACTICES

Water is essential for life, and maintaining hydration is important for physical and mental performance. The human body is largely made of water. Although we can live for up to 50 days without food, but without water we will survive only a few days, even in a cool climate. Most people do not drink enough water.

Good hydration cuts the risk of disease. Research shows that good hydration cuts the risk of breast cancer by 79%, reduces the risk of colon cancer by 45% & slashes the risk of bladder cancer by 50%.

Good hydration enhances mental clarity. A drop of just 2% in body water causes short-term memory problems and significant difficulties with concentration. Good hydration helps you become mentally alert throughout the day.

Mild dehydration occurs when you lose 3 - 5% of your body weight through the loss of fluids. Signs include:

- Dry mouth and lips; mouth may also feel a bit gummy or sticky
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue
- Elevated heart rate
- Headache
- Dizziness

Water leaves our bodies through the skin and in our exhaled breath all the time, amounting to about 1.5 pints each day. We lose another 0.2 pints through feces, about 1.6 quarts as urine, and 0.4 pints in normal perspiration. So, even living and breathing in a temperate climate requires about 2.6 quarts a day. Exercise and rises in temperature increase perspiration, loss of water, and hence fluid requirements. During sickness and diarrhea, losses of water will also increase considerably.

"The general guideline is to pay attention to your thirst," dietitians say.

*Ask the students: How much water should you drink per day?*

The conventional wisdom of eight 8-ounce glasses a day has been tossed aside. See below:

- The International Sports Medicine Institute has a formula for daily water intake: 1/2 ounce per pound of body weight if you're not active (that's ten eight-ounce glasses if you weigh 160 pounds) and 2/3 ounce per pound if you're active (13-14 glasses a day, at the same weight).
- The hotter your surroundings, the more fluids you will need to consume.
- The more you exercise, the more fluids you will need to consume.
- Liquids other than water count, as do water-rich food like fruits and vegetables.
- Eat water-rich foods like watermelon. Juice, soups, fruits, vegetables, and milk are 80-90 % water.