
WEEKLY TOOLBOX TALK: STAY HYDRATED

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Stay Hydrated

Water

The natural choice for hydration is water. It hydrates better than any other liquid, both before and during work. Water tends to be less expensive and more available than any other drink. You need to drink 4-6 ounces of water for every 15-20 minutes of work. That can add up to a lot of water! Water is the best, but it only helps you if you drink it.

Sports Drinks

Sports drinks don't hydrate better than water, but you are more likely to drink larger volumes, which leads to better hydration. The typical sweet-tart taste combination doesn't quench thirst, so you will keep drinking a sports drink long after water has lost its appeal.

Juice

Juice may be nutritious, but it isn't the best choice for hydration. The fructose, or fruit sugar, reduces the rate of water absorption so cells don't get hydrated very quickly. Juice is a food in its own right and it's uncommon for a person to drink sufficient quantities to keep hydrated. Juice has carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and electrolytes, but it isn't a great thirst quencher.

Carbonated Soft Drinks

When you get right down to it, the colas of the world aren't good for the body. Soft drinks are devoid of any real nutritional content. The carbohydrates will slow your absorption of water, but they will also provide a quick energy boost. In the long run, they aren't good for you, but if hydration is your goal, soft drinks aren't a bad choice. Avoid drinks with lots of sugar or caffeine, which will lessen the speed or degree of hydration.

Coffee and Tea

Coffee and tea can sabotage hydration. Both drinks act as diuretics, meaning they cause your kidneys to pull more water out of your bloodstream even as the digestive system is pulling water into your body. It's a two-steps-forward-one-step-back scenario.

Energy Drinks

Energy drinks, are different from sports drinks, which are designed to replace electrolytes and nutrients that a body pushed to physical extremes may need. When consumed in high enough amounts over a long enough period of time, caffeine can cause changes in blood flow and reduce insulin sensitivity, which affects the body's ability to regulate sugars from food. In Germany, where health officials have been tracking health effects of energy drinks since 2002, adverse events have included liver damage, seizures, racing heart rate, respiratory disorders and even death.

Many of these drinks do not label the caffeine content, and some energy drinks contain as much caffeine as found in 14 cans of soda.
