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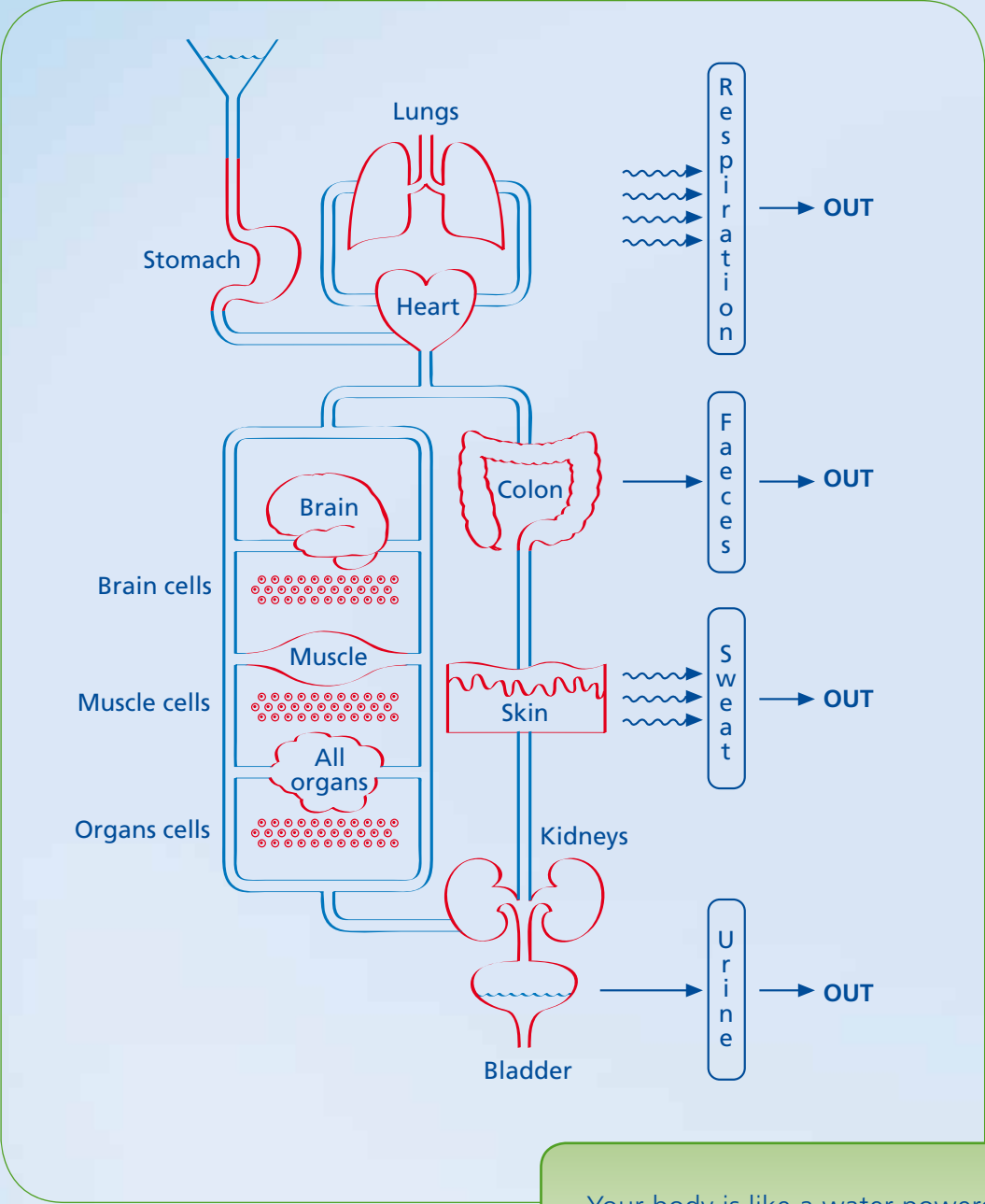


ARE YOU AT RISK FROM DEHYDRATION?

***A GUIDE FOR OLDER PEOPLE ABOUT
HOW WATER CAN AID GOOD HEALTH***

Our bodies need water to work. But how much should we drink?

HOW WATER KEEPS US WELL



Your body is like a water-powered engine that needs regular topping up with high-quality fluid to keep functioning properly. Your brain is in charge of regulating how much water your body holds on to or loses. It's an amazing process.



DID YOU KNOW THAT WATER MAKES OUR BODIES WORK?

Our bodies are about 60% water and as we get older, this percentage gets a little smaller. Every single cell needs a constant supply of fluid to do its job properly.

However, we use and lose water every second through urinating, sweating and also when we sleep. Half a litre of water a day goes in just breathing in and out.¹ That's why we need to keep our fluid levels topped up regularly throughout the day.

Don't rely on thirst to tell you when to drink!

Older people are likely to drink less water than needed. This is because as time passes we actually lose our sense of thirst. So by the time we feel the need to drink, we may already be dehydrated.

Good hydration enhances healthy living

Drink water regularly to replace the fluids your body uses up. You may find you quickly feel generally better, less tired and more energetic. Read on to find out why.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY BODY GETS DEHYDRATED?

Because your body needs water to work, running low on fluids affects virtually all aspects of health and well-being. Dehydration can cause feelings of light-headedness, tiredness,² headaches,³ and a sense that we're not at our best.

BENEFITS OF GOOD HYDRATION



Dehydration makes your heart beat faster⁴ and forces it to work harder.⁵ So drink up and help your heart function at its best.



Some studies have shown that the pain of dehydration headache may be reduced by drinking water.^{3,6,7}



Even mild dehydration can affect concentration levels, how tired you feel and your short-term memory.^{8,2} Restoring fluid balance can put you back on course for a healthier more enjoyable life.



HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I DRINK?

Water is accessible and it's totally good for you. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that women need 2.2 litres of water every day and men need 2.9 litres.⁹

However, not all of this has to be drunk as a liquid because foods, especially fruits and vegetables, contain water as well.

It's important to know that you cannot gain all your water needs from foods. Estimates vary but on average the water in foods amounts to around 800ml a day, so to ensure your total water needs are met, you need to top up with water.



A healthy habit to adopt would be to drink 2 litres of water every day. This is about 8 glasses.



If it's very hot, however, or if you've been exercising or have a stomach upset, you'll need to drink more to keep your water levels from running too low.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M DRINKING ENOUGH?

Look at the colour of your urine. It should be a light yellow colour. If it's dark or strong-smelling, you're dehydrated. However, some medications, conditions and foods can affect the colour and smell of urine so the best thing to do is to get into the habit of regular drinks throughout the day.

TIPS FOR KEEPING HYDRATED

Discuss how much water you need to drink with your doctor. Here are a few good ideas for keeping your fluid levels in good balance:

- ✓ Start the day with a fresh glass of water.
- ✓ Keep a bottle of water handy e.g. in your car, on your desk, in your bag.
In hot weather, try and keep the water cool if possible.
- ✓ Take regular sips of water even when you're not thirsty.
- ✓ Drink a glass of water at meal-times.
- ✓ Drink more water if you get hot or are sweating.

This advice is relevant to all ages. It's particularly important however for older people to follow the principles of good hydration given that over time we lose our sense of thirst.

Remember! Good hydration plays an important part in keeping you on top form - in mind and in body.



Ask the experts!

Contact your doctor or nurse if you have any concerns or would like to learn more about achieving healthy hydration for you and your family

References

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