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Drink to your health: Fuel wellness with water

Drinking water is like putting gas in your engine. Water fuels us — each system in our body depends on it to work. About 60 percent of our body is made of the stuff. But, each day we lose water in our breath, our sweat and in the bathroom. Drinking enough to replace what we lose is vital.

Water carries food and energy to our cells, flushes poisons from our organs, keeps our body at the right temperature, lubes our joints and brain and removes waste. Not drinking enough can lead to dehydration, which is what happens when your body doesn’t have the water it needs to do all these jobs. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy. When you don’t drink enough water, your body will tell you. You might feel very tired, get a headache or feel dizzy.

How much water should you drink? About 13 cups for men and about nine cups for women. This can differ by person and situation. When it’s hot, drink more. If you’re exercising, sick, pregnant or breast feeding you should also drink more. If you rarely feel thirsty and your urine is clear or light yellow, you’re most likely drinking enough water.

August is National Water Quality Month, a time to think about protecting our water sources, especially here in dry Colorado, where water has always been precious. Even little steps you take to use water wisely are needed. Don’t run the faucet while brushing your teeth and try taking shorter showers.

Colorado tap water is safe to drink. Every year, Denver Water collects more than 10,000 water samples and runs more than 50,000 tests throughout its system to make sure. But, if you live in a home built before the mid-50s that may have lead pipes, run your tap water until it’s cold to flush any lead-filled water from pipes before you drink it or cook with it.

The government works to make our water safe and healthy. Fluoride is an element found in water that...
helps keep your teeth and mouth healthy. That’s why it’s added to most toothpastes. In some parts of Colorado, the water source naturally houses enough fluoride. Most towns add more fluoride to their water to bring it up to healthier levels. This can help prevent tooth decay by as much as 40 percent — one more great reason to toast to your teeth, and your health, with a tall, cold glass of water.

**Tips for drinking more water**

1. **Freeze a few.**
   
   Keep bottles of water in your freezer and grab one when you head out. You’ll be more likely to sip chilled water than warm water.

2. **Fight boredom with flavor.**
   
   For different flavors, toss a few chunks of watermelon, a couple mint leaves or a slice of lemon in your water bottle and let it sit in the fridge for a few hours.

3. **Eat spicy foods.**
   
   Not only is hot pepper good for you, adding it to your food will help you drink more.

4. **Go “one for one.”**
   
   Drink one glass of water for each cup of coffee, can of soda, or other type of drink you enjoy.

5. **Keep a glass by your bed.**
   
   Leaving a glass on your nightstand will help remind you to drink a glass of water before you go to sleep at night.

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*Stay healthy, save money—and the planet—with tap water*

Buying plastic bottles of water is bad for your wallet, bad for the planet and can be bad for your health. Most store-bought bottled water comes in bottles that hold a chemical called bisphenol A (BPA) that’s been shown to be harmful to our health. Those bottles are even worse for the planet — each bottle can take up to 1,000 years to break down. Use stainless steel or glass bottles (many come wrapped in rubber to keep them from breaking) take water with you.

Buying water is a waste of money when it comes free from your tap. In most taste tests between tap and bottled water, tap water wins out.
I scream, you scream, we all scream for sunscreen!

Colorado’s 300 days of glorious sunshine are one reason people love living here. But all that fabulous sun, along with our climate and elevation, means we need to be extra careful to protect our skin. Luckily, today’s sunscreens help.

Why we need sunscreen

Even on cloudy days, sunlight contains two types of harmful rays, UVA rays and UVB rays. Soaking up too much of either can lead to skin cancer, early wrinkles and painful sunburns. The closer we are to the sun, the higher the power of the rays that reach us. Per 1,000 feet in elevation, we get hit with about five percent more of the sun’s power. In Denver, at 5,280 feet elevation, the sun hits us about 26 percent harder than it does at sea level. And, Colorado’s dry climate can lead to dry skin that’s more sensitive to UV rays. The rate of skin cancer is 15 percent higher in Colorado than the U.S. average, and skin cancer, or melanoma, is deadly. It kills one American per hour.

Which SPF?

Choose a sunscreen with broad-spectrum protection. That means the sunscreen protects against UVA and UVB rays. “SPF” stands for sun protection factor. Use one with at least 30 SPF, which blocks nearly 97 percent of UVB rays. Higher levels only offer a tiny bit more protection. SPF 50 blocks 98 percent while SPF 100 blocks 99 percent. Sunscreens with 30 to 50 SPF should be fine. Be sure to put on 10 minutes before you go outside and reapply at least every two hours and each time you come out of the water if you’re swimming.

Sources:
https://www.aad.org/media/stats/prevention-and-care/sunscreen-faqs
Caring for Summer Stings

Picture yourself enjoying a pleasant day outdoors. You stumble across a hornet, bee, yellow jacket or wasp, and you get stung. Now what? For most people a sting is just painful, but for a few, it can be life-threatening. After any sting it would be normal for you to experience pain or burning, redness, and swelling at the site of the sting. Pain or burning usually lasts for 1-2 hours. Then the pain should slowly get better and is followed by itching. Redness and swelling can worsen for up to 24 hours after the sting but should then start to get better. Redness will often go away after 3 days, and swelling will often go away after 7 days.

To care for any bee sting, you should first remove the stinger if it is visible (only honeybees leave their stinger). Stingers look like a tiny black dot and can often be removed with tweezers, scotch tape, or you can scrape it out with a credit card or butter knife. If you are not able to remove the stinger, it will come out on its own as your skin sheds. Next, use a cold compress for 20 minutes and repeat as needed. This will reduce pain and swelling to the sting. You can also make a paste from meat tenderizer or baking soda and apply it to the site for pain relief. This defuses the venom, but should only be applied one time to any sting. For further pain relief, you can take Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Naproxen, or any other over-the-counter pain relief medication. To help with itching, the Nurseline suggests you take an antihistamine such as Benadryl, Claritin, Zyrtec, or use Hydrocortisone Cream.

Most stings will not need further treatment. On the other hand, if within 2 hours of the sting you develop any wheezing, trouble breathing, hoarseness or cough, tightness in your throat or chest, a swollen tongue, widespread hives with itching, facial swelling, vomiting or abdominal pain, you should call 9-1-1 and seek medical help right away. These can be signs of a life threatening allergic reaction. If you have a known allergic reaction to bee stings, you may have been prescribed an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen), and you should keep this with you at all times. One quick jab to the thigh helps slow down the allergic reaction, but using the pen is often not enough. You should still seek medical help for observation and further treatment if needed. You should also seek medical attention if you are stung by a swarm of bees, lose consciousness, are stung inside the mouth or on the eye, or if you obtain more than 50 stings. Bee stings rarely get infected, but if you have any signs of infection that start 24 hours after the sting, then you may need to follow up with your doctor. The signs of infection to watch for are fever, increase in redness, increase in pain, red streaks, swelling greater than four inches, or drainage from the site of the sting.

The Denver Health NurseLine is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can assist with any questions you may have concerning bee stings or other medical complaints. They can be reached at 303-739-1261.

By: Rhonda Tanner, MSN, MHA, BSN, RN

References:
http://www.stcc-triage.com/
http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/features/top-7-summer-health-hazards
http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bee-stings/basics/definition/con-20034120
Zu-Canoes

Zucchini stuffed with tomatoes, mozzarella and basil make a fresh summer side dish. For the nicest presentation, use long, relatively skinny zucchini.

Makes: 4 servings, Total Time: 25 minutes

What You Need:
• 2 medium 2-inch-wide zucchini
• 1/2 teaspoon salt
• 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
• 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
• 1 tablespoon white-wine vinegar
• 1 tablespoon minced shallot
• 1 cup quartered grape tomatoes
• 1/2 cup diced mozzarella cheese, preferably fresh
• 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil

To Make:
• Trim both ends off zucchini; cut in half lengthwise. Cut a thin slice off the backs so each half sits flat. Scoop out the pulp, leaving a 1/4-inch shell. Finely chop the pulp; set aside.
• Place the zucchini halves in a microwave-safe dish. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cover and microwave on High until tender-crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. (Alternatively, steam in a steamer basket over 1 inch of boiling water in a large skillet or pot.)
• Whisk oil, vinegar, shallot and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Add tomatoes, cheese, basil and the reserved zucchini pulp; toss to combine. Divide the filling among the zu-canoes.

Nutrition:
Per serving: 87 calories; 4 g fat (1 g sat, 3 g mono); 3 mg cholesterol; 7 g carbohydrates; 0 g added sugars; 7 g protein; 2 g fiber; 408 mg sodium; 454 mg potassium. Nutrition Bonus: Vitamin C (48% daily value), Vitamin A (19% dv), Calcium (16% dv). Carbohydrate Servings: 1/2

Sources: http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes/zu_canoes.html
For many of us the most difficult part of including exercise in our daily life is getting past our mental block against exercise. Here are a few tips on how you can change your attitude about exercise and begin to think of it as a normal part of your daily routine. You might even start to look forward to your workout!

1. The Five Minute Rule: Make a deal with yourself that you are going to exercise for 5 minutes. No matter how busy you may be, you can set aside 5 minutes each day to work out. The deal is you can stop exercising after 5 minutes if you want to, but you have to stick with it for those 5 minutes. Most people will find that when the 5 minutes are up they will continue exercising for a full 30 minutes or longer without much resistance. It’s the getting started that is the most difficult part.

2. Use the Buddy System: Find a workout buddy who will be able to offer moral support and commit to beginning an exercise routine with you. Both you and your friend will be more likely to stick with an exercise plan if you feel accountable to someone else. We don’t like letting our friends down, so we will exercise on days when we normally would have made up an excuse to skip a work out. Turning exercise into a social activity can also make the experience more enjoyable.

3. Distract Yourself: Exercise while you are watching TV or listening to upbeat music. You are more likely to exercise harder and for longer if you are not constantly watching the clock and wishing for it to be over.

4. Bribe Yourself: Rewards work! Make sure to reward yourself for meeting exercise goals. This can include immediate rewards such as taking a relaxing bubble bath and longer term rewards such as a buying a new outfit or treating yourself to a massage for sticking with your daily exercise program for a whole month.

5. Visualize: When you are sitting on your couch coming up with excuses not to exercise, take a few minutes to visualize yourself exercising and feeling good. Imagine being in the last stretch of your run and how good your body feels. Or imagine the stress leaving your body as your breathe in fresh air and release the tension from your muscles.

For more healthy living tips like this, visit our blog at STRONGbody STRONGmind.org
The Childhood Obesity Prevention and Treatment Project recognized Denver Health’s Healthy Lifestyle Clinic (HLC) as one of the nation’s top 5 most promising treatments of childhood obesity. The success of this clinic is due to the multidisciplinary treatment model and family-centered care. The team is made up of medical providers, dietitians, behavioral health counselors, and health coaches. The clinic sees children ages 2-18. Each visit at the clinic is about 90 minutes long. During this time, the patient and family meet with the various team members based on their needs. The team then works together with the child and their family to reach their health goals.

The HLC has bilingual healthcare providers on staff and offers certified interpreter services to the family if needed. The HLC is mobile and travels to three clinics: Eastside Family Health Center, Westside Family Health Center, and the Kids Care Clinic (on the Denver Health main campus). It will soon be in the School-Based Clinics and offered in more of the Denver Health primary care clinics as well.

A comment from Brinda, DHMP Health Coach:

“When I closed her from the health coaching program, her mom began to cry because she was so happy with the successes she saw in her daughter. It was wonderful to see the patient light up when she talked about how much she enjoys exercising, how much more energy she has now, and how she needs to buy a belt because her pants no longer fit her!”

New Cardiology Suites at Denver Health

Keeping your heart at its healthiest just got easier at Denver Health. Our brand-new cardiology suites feature advanced technology to treat A-fib and chest pain, open blocked arteries, implant pacemakers and more. The state-of-the-art cath lab is equipped with the latest technology to provide enhanced patient care and uses x-ray equipment to diagnose and treat heart disease. If you have a heart condition, ask your doctor for a referral to Denver Health’s heart and vascular center. Learn more about Denver Health heart and vascular services at DenverHealth.org/Heart.
same day care

When you need care today and can’t get in to see your provider...

1. **The NurseLine is here to help you.**
   Call 303-739-1261 and speak to a Denver Health nurse about your health concerns. Sometimes they can even call in a prescription for you.

2. **Visit a Walgreens Healthcare Clinic or a King Soopers Little Clinic.**
   As a member of Denver Health Medical Plan, you have access to all Walgreens Healthcare Clinics and King Soopers Little Clinics in the Denver area. These clinics are a good option for you if you have a sore throat, sinus infection or the flu.

3. **DispatchHealth will come to you.** *
   DispatchHealth is bringing back the house call. DispatchHealth is our on-demand health care provider that can treat a range of injuries and illnesses in the comfort and convenience of your home. Avoid unnecessary expenses and long waits in the emergency room. DispatchHealth physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants have years of experience working in urgent care centers and emergency rooms. For a low set fee, DispatchHealth will come directly to you. DispatchHealth is open 7 days a week 9am – 9pm.

   Visit DispatchHealth at [www.dispatchhealth.com](http://www.dispatchhealth.com), download the free app or call 303-500-1518.

4. **Visit an Urgent Care center.**
   You can visit any urgent care center that is convenient for you. You are covered at any urgent care center in the U.S.

5. **Emergency room.**
   If you need emergency care, go to the nearest hospital or call 9-1-1. Your DHMP plan will cover you at any emergency room, anywhere in the U.S.

* This does not apply to Medicare Choice/Select members
Why do people with diabetes need eye exams?
Diabetes (also called high blood sugar) can lead to eye problems that cause vision loss or blindness. Everyone with diabetes should have eye exams. The longer you have diabetes, the more likely you will have eye problems. By the time you notice any vision problems, your eyes may already be seriously damaged. A complete exam can help find symptoms early. Early treatment may help protect your vision.

An eye exam can check for common eye problems that can develop over a period of years.

- People with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy. When blood sugar stays above normal for a long time, the small blood vessels in the retina (an inside part at the back of the eye) can be damaged. These blood vessels may begin to leak and bleed. If not recognized and treated, this can lead to serious eye damage, possibly blindness.
- People with diabetes are also at a higher risk for glaucoma. Glaucoma is increased pressure inside the eye, which can cause blindness.

How often should you be tested?
If you have diabetes, get tested every year, or more often if your doctor recommends it. If your eye exam results are normal, your doctor may consider follow-up exams every two years instead of every year. But if you are diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy or glaucoma, you may need eye exams more often.

How can I schedule an eye exam?
You can schedule an eye exam yourself by contacting the Denver Health Appointment Center at (303) 436-4949. Tell the agent that you have diabetes and would like to schedule your eye exam. You can schedule your appointment at Denver Health, or at a One-Hour Optical location.

Also, Denver Health Medical Plan is calling health plan members with diabetes who are due for eye exams. We’ve partnered with the Denver Health Eye Clinic to provide more appointments reserved only for our members. If you are due for an eye exam, you may be contacted to schedule an appointment.
Healthy Strides

Walking each day is one of the best steps you can take to stay active and independent as you grow older. Each step helps keep everything from your brain to your heart healthy and can even help fight depression and ease lower back pain.

One of the keys to becoming more active is making it a part of your normal routine. Walking with a friend can help make it more fun and help you make walking a habit. Setting goals can, too. Start with a stroll to the mailbox or around the block and see how you feel. Try adding five minutes a day until you reach 10,000 steps (you can buy a pedometer to track your steps for about $10-15).

Don’t forget, when the weather’s lousy, you can always do your walking at indoor malls and at community recreation centers.

End of Life Choices – Make Your Wishes Known

Advance Care Directives (also known as advance directives) are specific instructions, prepared in advance, that are used to direct a person’s medical care if he/she becomes unable to do so in the future because of illness, injury, or life-threatening condition. Advance directives can also appoint someone the patient trusts to make decisions about medical care if they become unable to make (or communicate) these decisions.

The following are a few of the forms that are considered advance directives:

- Living Will
- Medical Durable Power of Attorney (MDPOA)
- Five Wishes
- MOST – Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment

Talking with family members, legal, health or other professionals is highly encouraged before signing such a document. Once you have thought about your wishes, write them on one of the form/s and let others know.

Review your wishes from time to time to remind everyone and keep the form up to date.

More information can be obtained from your health care provider, social worker, community agencies, and/or legal professionals.

Other Important Information related to advance directives:

- Your advance directive will be included in your current medical record and available to your care providers.
- Denver Health cannot refuse care or otherwise discriminate against any individual based on whether they do or do not have an advance directive.
- You have the right to file a complaint about Denver Health’s noncompliance with advance directives. DHMP Member Services can provide you with information about where to file the complaint.
- DHMP has written policies on advance directives that help educate staff and providers on the importance of advance directives.

Medicare Member Services: 303-602-2111
For more health lifestyle recipe wellness exercise tips...

Visit our wellness blog STRONGbodySTRONGmind.org as well as Denver Health Medical Plan on Facebook