



HEALTH

# Drink to your health

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

Thirsty? Then your body is on its way to becoming dehydrated. The average adult has between 10 and 12 gallons of water in his or her body — accounting for 50 percent of body weight. That water plays a critical role in nearly every bodily process. And being a quart or two low can impact how you feel.

"Water is needed by virtually every muscle or tissue cell," said David Brennan, an exercise physiologist at Baylor

College of Medicine in Houston. "Regulating body temperature is one of the most important roles water plays in the body. Without a plentiful supply of water, the body can have a difficult time maintaining a normal temperature."

Nearly everything you do during the day — including typing, talking, walking, and even eating — requires energy. That energy, in turn, generates heat, which escapes the body through perspiration.

Perspiration is the mechanism that keeps the body cool.

"We lose about two and a half quarts of water a day through normal activity," Brennan said. "People who exercise lose even more and should drink water throughout the day to meet the demands of exercise. But don't wait until you are thirsty. Thirst is the body's way of saying your water level is low."

Dehydration is the most serious consequence of not drinking enough water. The

loss of just two to three percent of the body-water weight can impact some of the functions of the body. To guard against dehydration, drink up.

"Drinking eight to 12 cups of water a day should keep you well hydrated," Brennan said. "Water is best for fluid replacement, but sports drinks and juices are also good options."

Brennan suggests limiting consumption of beverages containing alcohol and caffeine — they cause water loss.

**TIPS TO BE FIT**

## Health gurus give exercise tips

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

With a vast number of Americans beginning to exercise, health officials say proper warm-up and technique are needed to exercise safer.

Here are a few tips to help:

- Do toe-touches while sitting on the floor with your legs slightly bent. This takes stress off your back.
- Never do straight leg sit-ups. Bending your legs will take some stress off the lower back.
- Never bounce while stretching. This could tear muscle and injure tendons and ligaments.
- Do all standing exercises with your feet at least hip width apart. If you stand with your feet together, it's like standing on one foot.
- Use a spotter. A spotter should keep the weight moving when you are near your

maximum level. When you strain while lifting, you build up pressure in the body that can cause hemorrhaging, headaches and vision problems.

• Use common sense.

Health officials urge joggers to increase training intensity slowly.

If you increase the number of miles you are jogging or your training intensity too fast you could cause bone stress fractures and muscle tears. Increasing the amount of exercise you do can be beneficial, but only if you do it gradually.

When jogging add an eighth of a mile a week. If you start with a mile, in two months you will be jogging three miles with out injury.

If you are lifting weights add five pounds at a time every other week. In two months you

will have increased your lifts by 20 pounds.

If you do not increase your training gradually, you will increase your risk of injury. This goes for the advanced exerciser also.

Health officials say people should examine all health-related information.

Every day we get new information about health and fitness topics like what to eat, what to wear or how to exercise. Don't believe everything you read or hear. Ask yourself these few questions when trying to evaluate information:

1. Is the information being used to advertise a product? There are a lot of infomercials out today that seem like real information.
2. Who paid for the research? You always have to consider the source because no one is going to do a bad study




on themselves.

3. Do you believe the information just because you want to believe it? Be objective, know what's being explained. Lead with your head not your heart.

4. Do the experts agree? Experts do disagree but some of them should support the new information.

5. If you still can't make heads or tails out of it, ask us. If we don't know the answer, we'll try to find it for you.



**HEALTH FOCUS**  
By James L. Phillips, M.D.  
Baylor College of Medicine

## Strokes warrant emergency action

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

Strokes symptoms require fast action. While most of us know that heart attack victims need to go to the hospital immediately, few people react that promptly to stroke symptoms.

Called a "brain attack," a stroke occurs when a blood clot or a ruptured artery interrupts the blood flow to part of the brain. Cells die in the area deprived of blood, oxygen and nutrients, and this initial cell death starts a chain reaction leading to further tissue damage. The result can be permanent disability and even death.

Strokes used to be hard to treat, but treatments effective in the first few hours following a stroke are being tested and approved.

"Clot-busting" drugs similar to the ones used for heart attacks are also beneficial for strokes. One approved drug, t-PA, helps break up blood clots and prevent further cell damage.

However, to minimize damage, t-PA and experimental stroke drugs must be administered within the first three to six hours of stroke symptoms. To benefit from these medications, you must get to the hospital immediately.

Dr. Dennis Mosier, a neurologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, is testing a new drug for early stroke treatment called a neuroprotective. This type of drug, designed to stop the chain reaction of cell damage, must be given within six hours.

Mosier believes that physicians will one day treat stroke patients in the emergency room with a combination of neuroprotectives and clot-busters.

Chances for stroke recovery are greatly improved by fast action. Do not hesitate to call "9-1-1" at the first sign of any of these symptoms:

- One-sided weakness, numbness or paralysis.
- Problems speaking or understanding.
- Dizziness or loss of balance.
- Blurred or decreased vision.
- Sudden severe or unexplained headache.

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