

# *A Message from the Naturopath....*

## **WATER...Are You Getting Enough??**

Water is vital to our health, longevity and overall well-being as it constitutes up to 60% of our body's weight depending on our sex, age and body composition. Women contain less muscle mass than men and therefore have 50% of their body weight as water. Athletes, however, have a higher percentage of muscle and thus a higher percentage of water in their body. Muscle tissue is 75% water while fat tissue is approximately 20%. Water performs many important functions in the body such as:

- It's involved in all aspects of digestion ie. Physical and chemical digestion, absorption, metabolism, secretion and excretion.
- It's a vital component in all body cells, giving them structure and assisting in the manufacturing process of ATP and GTP, the two sources of chemical energy in the body. Water also has adhesive properties involved in cell architecture and bondage.
- It acts as a temperature regulator therefore water must be consumed regularly throughout the day in sufficient amounts to ensure proper thermal regulation. This function is even more important among athletes.
- It makes up the "waterways" that transport chemical products along our nerve cells in the transmission of nervous system messages.
- It allows the body to have an ideal fluid viscosity in order for proteins and enzymes to function optimally.
- It is a lubricant surrounding joints, heart and intestines allowing for their smooth and proper functioning.
- It is a cushion for the brain, spinal cord and joints

The average adult loses approximately 2 litres of water everyday in urine, sweat, feces and evaporation through the lungs. Water losses are slightly less for children at approximately 1-1 1/2 litres per day depending on their age and size. Water loss is more abundant among athletes and as a result they need increased intake to keep the above functions of water running smoothly.

Insufficient water will decrease the body's potential of achieving the above functions optimally and can hinder an athlete's performance. Some symptoms of insufficient water include muscle cramps, headache, fatigue, irritability and decreased concentration. During exercise it is important that the athlete drinks more water than their thirst demands. Electrolytes are also lost when there is excessive sweating during training especially on very hot days where the athlete is performing for many hours. Electrolyte drinks are important during those times but should not be the only source of water. Many of the electrolyte beverages contain high amounts of sugar. Drinks with 24 g of simple sugars are not beneficial. Educating oneself on

different sports drinks will help to provide enough electrolytes without the large amounts of simple sugars. Vegetables are a great source of electrolytes and should be consumed during break time instead of sports drinks.

Water is taken into the body primarily by fluids but also by solid foods and the oxidation of food. On average, at least 2/3 of our daily water intake should be taken in the form of beverages such as water and diluted 100% pure juices. The last 1/3 of our water should come from foods that contain high concentrations of water. For instance, fruits and vegetables contain up to 95% water.

#### References

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- Ruud, Jaime S. 1996. *Nutrition and the Female Athlete*. CRC Press: Florida.

For information on how Naturopathic Medicine can help you and your family, arrange for your **complimentary 15 minute session** with our Naturopathic Doctor, Mélanie Jacobson.

**\*\*Remember... Many health and benefit plans cover Naturopathic Services\*\***

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Mélanie Jacobson, ND graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Science degree. She then completed her studies at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine. She is very excited to continue her individualized treatments at Bloor-Avenue Chiropractic using Nutrition and Lifestyle Counseling, Botanical Medicine, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture.