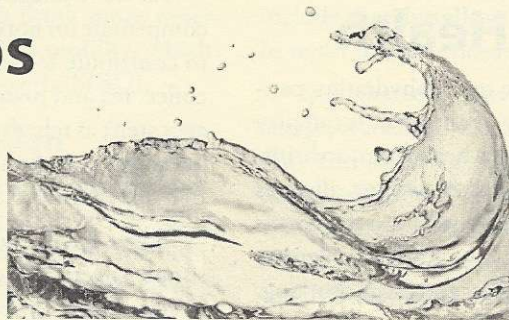


The Healing Power of Water and Herbs

Herbs and Water
are a Powerful Team
for Regaining and
Maintaining Good Health



Water is the foundation of all life. Our bodies are 65-75% water by volume, but since the water molecule is very small compared to molecules of proteins, fats and carbohydrates, more than 95% of the molecules in your body are water molecules. Few people consider water as a way of solving their health problems, even though good health depends so heavily on this one substance.

Water is vital for biological processes to work correctly. It is essential to digestion, transportation of nutrients, elimination of wastes and temperature regulation. Water also keeps tissues supple and flexible, cushioning and lubricating joints. New research on the nature of water is demonstrating that water may also play a role in energy production and storage, as well as directly driving many biological processes.

In modern society, many people drink soda pop, coffee, tea and energy drinks to quench their thirst. They may even consume alcoholic beverages like beer or wine instead of water. None of these beverages can take the place of water. In fact, they may actually increase the body's need for water because many of them have diuretic properties. This means they increase water loss. Liquid foods, such as fruit and vegetable juices, milk and milk substitutes are also not substitutes for water, since the water they contain is needed to digest and process them.

As a result, many people are mildly to moderately dehydrated most of the time, and this dehydration problem tends to increase with age. The lack of moisture in the body results in many symptoms of "dis-ease" in the form of minor aches and pains, headaches, indigestion, respiratory problems, poor sleep, lack of mental clarity, fatigue, nervousness, dry cough and so forth. People often try to correct these problems with medications, food, herbs or supplements, but none of these things can replace the need for water.

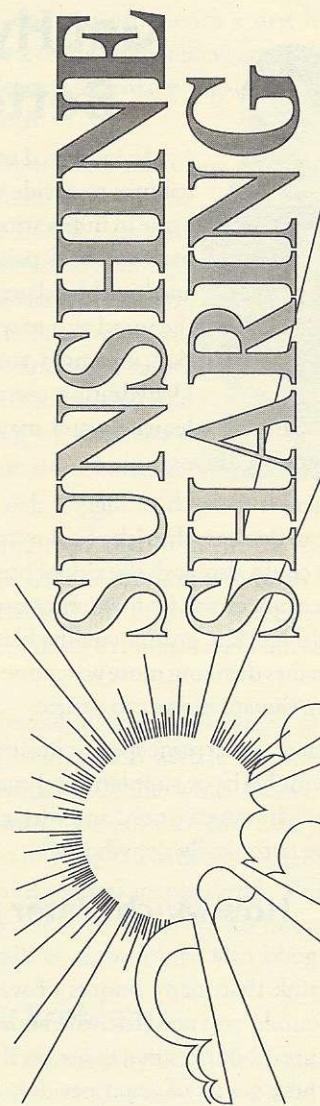
Herbs, Nutritional Supplements and Water

Traditionally, people used herbs primarily in the form of teas or decoctions. This meant that in addition to the herbal constituents the body was getting extra water. Today, most people take herbs in the form of capsules or extracts. Unless people take plenty of water with these capsules and extracts, they are unlikely to experience the full benefits of the remedies they are taking. In fact, as we'll explain in this newsletter, many herbal remedies work by moving water from one part of the body to another, so they don't work if you're dehydrated.

To be utilized by the body, the dried powders in herbal capsules and tablets have to be dissolved in water. This is also true for nutritional supplements. The amount of herb powder found in 3-4 capsules is about right for making a cup of tea. Therefore, people taking herbs or supplements in capsules or tablets should consume about one cup of water for every 3-4 capsules or tablets they are taking. So, if they are taking 12 capsules, they need three to four cups of water to get the best results from the remedies.

Tinctures and glycerites should also be dispersed in water for optimum effectiveness. For best results, a person should take about one cup of water per 30-60 drops or 1/4-1/2 teaspoon of a tincture, glycerite or syrup to get maximum benefits from the product.

Turn the page to learn more about how water and herbs work together ...



Vol. 25 No. 5

Your guide to better health the natural way.

Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

Sunshine Sharing is an independent educational publication and receives no financial support from any herb or health product manufacturer. Your comments, questions and personal experiences are welcome. Send them to *Sunshine Sharing*, P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791-1239 or comments@treelite.com.

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Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
Assistant Writer: Kenneth Hepworth
Editor: David Horne
Associate Editors: Carolyn Hughes,
Leslie Lechner, Sharon Grimes

Get Hydrated for Better Health



As indicated on page one, dehydration contributes to a wide variety of ailments. It can play a role in indigestion, colitis, heart burn, arthritis, back and neck pain, headaches, asthma, allergies and high blood pressure. Dehydration also affects the mind and may be a factor in anxiety, depression, insomnia, memory loss and foggy thinking.

Dehydration even causes fatigue. On the other hand, drinking adequate water may help prevent chronic and degenerative diseases.

There is research to suggest that drinking five glasses of water daily can decrease the risk of colon cancer by 45%. Increased water intake could also slash the risk of breast cancer by 79% and reduce bladder cancer risk by 50%. Increased water intake can also result in healthier skin, greater vitality, better sleep and enhanced mood. This makes drinking more water one of the easiest and least expensive healing therapies one can utilize.

Before we list some specific health issues that water (in combination with herbs or supplements) may help to resolve, let's look at how much water we need and why a large percentage of Americans may be chronically dehydrated.

How Much Water Do You Need?

A good rule of thumb is to divide your body weight in half and drink that many ounces of water per day. So, if you weigh 160 pounds, you need to drink about 80 ounces of water each day. There are 32 ounces in a quart, so this would equate to a little less than three quarts of water per day.

If you aren't drinking this much water and don't get thirsty, you really need to drink more water anyway. Once dehydration reaches a certain point, the thirst mechanism shuts off. Senior citizens are at greater risk for dehydration because their bodies are less effective at letting them know when they need water. Also, many people mistake thirst for hunger, so they eat, instead of drink.

Furthermore, as we become dehydrated, water is not lost from all parts of the body equally. Only 8% of the water loss is from the blood, and blood water levels regulate thirst. Twenty-six percent is from the lymph and extracellular fluids and 66% is from inside the cells. When you've consumed enough water to stop feeling thirsty, you've simply consumed enough water to rehydrate the blood, but not necessarily enough to rehydrate the cells and the lymph.

A good indication of how well hydrated you are is the color of your urine. Unless you are taking vitamins (which often color the urine), your urine should be relatively clear. If your urine is dark you aren't drinking enough water to properly dilute toxins in your body.

As for the kind of water you drink, make it as pure as you can. There are many ways to purify water, from simple filters to more complex units like the **Nature's Spring Reverse Osmosis** appliance. Use whatever method fits your budget and helps you drink more.

Other Beverages Don't Count

As we've already stated, don't think that other beverages will compensate for not drinking water, as many modern beverages tend to contribute to dehydration. For instance, the caffeine found in coffee, tea and many sodas acts as a diuretic, so caffeinated beverages aren't as rehydrating as pure water. If you consume caffeinated beverages you should add at least an equal amount of extra water to compensate for their diuretic effects.

Sugar-laden sodas, fruit juice and other beverages high in simple sugars also don't help with hydration. The high amounts of sugar enter the blood stream and trigger a release of insulin to try to drive these sugars out of the blood. As cells develop insulin resistance, the body flushes the excess sugar out of the body via the urine. This is why excessive thirst, dryness and frequent urination are early warning signs of diabetes.

Beverages with artificial sweeteners aren't any better. Many are made with aspartate and phenylalanine, which act as excitatory neurotransmitters. For instance, aspartame causes the brain to use up its energy stores, which increases hunger and sugar cravings. About 10% of aspartame gets converted to formaldehyde and methyl alcohol in the liver, compounds known to cause nerve damage and blindness.

Alcoholic beverages are also dehydrating. Alcohol inhibits vasopressin, a hormone from the pituitary that inhibits water loss. It dehydrates the brain, but causes the release of endorphins (one reason it is addictive). Alcohol is converted to sugar, which also imbalances blood sugar. In fact, most of the symptoms of a hangover are due to dehydration and blood sugar imbalances.



Herbs and Water for Specific Health Problems

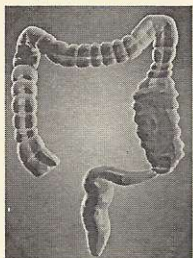
Many people think that herbs and supplements will fix their problems, but they do not consume enough water for the herbs and supplements to work properly. The following is a list of specific health issues water can help to heal and why it's essential to increase water intake when using herbs and supplements for these problems.

Digestive Problems

Digestion is the process of breaking down fats, proteins and carbohydrates into their component parts (fatty acids, amino acids and simple sugars) and dissolving them in water. The process of digestion requires a great deal of water, especially for protein digestion. When one is dehydrated, digestion is poor, which can result in acid indigestion, heartburn and other digestive problems.

Taking enzyme supplements like **Food Enzymes** and **PDA** helps a person digest food, but not if they are dehydrated. So, if you have digestive problems try drinking one or two glasses of water about 20-30 minutes before you eat. It also helps to take a pinch of an unrefined natural salt (like NSP's **Sea Salt**) with the water. This can help to stimulate hydrochloric acid production. Then, take digestive enzymes and PDA with meals.

If you're thirsty during meals, it's OK to drink water, but make sure it's slightly warm or room temperature water, not ice water. Ice water inhibits digestion. It's also good to drink more water between meals, as this helps improve intestinal motility, which helps prevent small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO).



Constipation

At the end of the digestive process, the body "recycles" water used in digestion by absorbing it in the colon. If you're dehydrated, the body absorbs as much water as it can, resulting in a dry stool and constipation. All herbal laxatives work by helping the colon hold onto water. For instance, herbs containing anthraquinone glycosides (like **cascara sagrada**, Turkey rhubarb, buckthorn and senna) work by inhibiting water absorption. These herbs form the basis for stimulant laxative formulas like **LBS II**, **LB-X**, **LB Extract** and **Senna Combination**. If you take these laxative herbs without drinking more water, you're making yourself more dehydrated by inhibiting the body from recycling the water used in digestion.

Other laxatives work in a similar manner. **Gentle Move** contains a magnesium salt that holds water in the colon, and the fiber in bulk laxatives, such as **LOCLO**, **Psyllium Hulls** and **Psyllium Hulls Combination**, also helps the colon retain water. So again, one has to increase water intake when taking these remedies.

Lymphatic Congestion

Both lymphatic and respiratory congestion may also be caused by dehydration. Remember that dehydration causes more water to be lost from the lymph (26%) than from the blood (8%). So, dehydration will contribute to lymphatic congestion. Most herbs that help move lymph are high in mineral electrolytes (salts), which draw water into the lymph, thinning it and helping it flow properly. So, if you aren't consuming enough water, these remedies will not be as effective.

A great remedy for lymphatic congestion (and water retention) is to take 1/2 teaspoon of **Lymphatic Drainage** and 1/2 teaspoon of **Kidney Drainage** and put them in a quart of water. One can then sip one or two quarts of this mixture throughout the day.

Respiratory Problems

Chronic sinus congestion, dry cough and respiratory allergies may also involve dehydration. Mucus is secreted by respiratory membranes to help keep them moist and to protect them from particulate matter like dust and pollen as well as infectious organisms. Mucus is about 95% water, which is thickened with glycoproteins. This mucus traps irritants and allows them to be swept out of respiratory passages by tiny hair-like projections called cilia.

When we are dehydrated, mucus thickens, making it difficult to expel. This allows particles and microbes to accumulate on the sensitive mucus membranes, which irritates them. Water acts as both a natural decongestant (thinning the mucus) and expectorant (stimulating the cilia to expel the mucus). When you use decongestant and expectorant herbs, such as **ALJ**, you are moving water to the mucus membranes to thin and expel mucus (and the irritants it contains). So, be sure to drink plenty of water.

When the lungs are dry, one can experience a dry, hacking cough. Herbs that draw moisture to the lungs, relieving this dryness, include **marshmallow**, **mullein** and **licorice**. Again, an increase in water intake is needed as well.

Dehydrated mucus membranes also make one more prone to allergic reactions. Mucus and tears flush pollen, dust and animal dander out of the eyes and sinuses. With dehydration, there isn't enough watery mucus to flush these substances away. In response to the irritation cells release histamine, which forces water to the membranes to try to flush the irritants. The irritation may also result in inflammation and swelling of respiratory tissues. This can cause chronic sinus blockage and/or asthma.



Unfortunately, most people treat this problem by trying to block the action of histamine with antihistamines, or to reduce the swelling with corticosteroids. Both of these strategies don't address the dehydration and resulting irritation, and tend to make the problem worse.

A simple remedy for reducing allergic reactions is to drink plenty of water and take a little natural salt with it. The water and salt stimulate production of mucus and tears, which flush irritants away and reduce allergic reactions. One can also reduce the inflammation by mixing a tablespoon of **Thai-Go** with natural lemon aid made with real lemon juice and natural maple syrup. This cools the irritation and helps reduce the swelling, plus adds more water. **Vitamin C** also acts as a natural antihistamine.

Kidney Problems

Water retention may be a final effort by the body to hold onto water when it is severely dehydrated. Conventional wisdom says, "avoid salt and drink less water," but instead, try drinking more water and taking **Combination Potassium** (which contains natural sodium and potassium salts) to help the body flush the water. Diuretic herbs move water to the kidneys for elimination. So, when taking herbs like **Cranberry** and **Buchu**, **Kidney Activator** or **Chinese Kidney Activator**, you should also increase water intake.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) a deficiency of kidney qi (energy) is associated with back pain, weakness of the legs, knees and ankles, arthritis and osteoporosis. This may be because a primary job of the kidneys is to flush the acid waste of metabolism out of the bloodstream. When you don't drink enough water, this acid waste concentrates, which can irritate urinary passages and force the body to buffer waste acids in the blood with minerals "borrowed" from bones, joints and connective tissues. Taking **KB-C** and increasing water intake helps to reverse this problem.

Continued on next page

Additional Help and Information

For more information on how water and herbs can improve your health, contact the person who gave this newsletter to you. You can also consult the following sources:

Water for Health, for Healing, for Life by Batmanghelidj, MD
Your Body's Many Cries for Water by F. Batmanghelidj, MD



Continued from page three

Relieving Pain with Water

Many people have found that increasing their water intake reduces pain of all kinds in their body, but especially headache, back and neck pain. Preliminary research indicates that 8-10 glasses of water a day could significantly ease back and joint pain for up to 80% of sufferers. This is because water is part of the buffering system that cushions joints. **Everflex, Joint Support** and **Joint Health** help to rebuild this buffering system, but only when there is adequate water to create the joint cushioning effect.

Mood and Brain Health

The brain is 80% water, so proper hydration is essential to its function. A mere 2% drop in body water can trigger fuzzy short-term memory, trouble with basic math, and difficulty focusing

Water is of Vital Importance to Life and Health

Water can be one of the most effective “medicines” for healing (and one of the least expensive). Herbs and supplements can’t do their job if you’re dehydrated, so water is an essential component of any supplement program. Learn more inside this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*.

on the computer screen or on a printed page. So, if you feel tired, flushed, irritable, anxious, dejected, depressed, inadequate or “heavy” in the head, you’re probably dehydrated.

Dehydration also inhibits the production of serotonin, causing mood and other bodily functions to suffer. A well-hydrated brain reduces anxiety and helps you sleep more soundly. It also helps you concentrate and remember things better.

Water and Other Health Problems

If you’re overweight, try drinking a glass of water anytime you feel hungry. If you still feel hungry 20-30 minutes later, then go ahead and eat. However, you’ll tend to eat less when you drink more water, which can really help with weight loss.

Also remember the old adage to drink plenty of water when you have an infection (as it helps immunity). Also consider drinking more water if you have metabolic syndrome, diabetes or high blood pressure.