

## The main thing about drinking water is to do it!

That is why the first set of instructions *How to have a great colonic* keeps things simple.

It's good to have some fundamental principles, master them and thereafter, refine them. My article '*Dehydration and the colon*' briefly explored the systemic effect that drinking too little water has on various body systems: for example disruption of digestion/elimination, blood toxicity, and poisoning the body; digestive tract diseases, including constipation. If toxins are not eliminated via the intestines and kidneys, the body tries to get rid of it through the lungs, which causes increased breathing and irregular heartbeat. When toxins in the blood get to the brain, a person might develop migraine headaches. The lack of water will result in dry and scaly skin, split hair ends and brittle nails. And so on and so on.

Yoga is full of wonderful little tips for skillful living; in fact one yoga teacher I know is fond of saying that yoga is *skills in action*. Here are some yogic ideas related to water drinking, which play a key part in maintaining good health and well-being.

### **1. Hydrate well in the morning and thereafter, don't eat for an hour.**

The principle is that a large serving of water (600ml to a litre) in the morning washes the stomach and the digestive tract. Cleaning our digestive system and priming it for action is as natural a requirement as brushing our teeth. In the morning the stomach hasn't yet woken up. The morning water intake activates the gut walls for digestion. Why is it said not to eat for an hour after the early morning water? Ayurveda holds that even water needs to be 'digested', an idea alien to us in the West; nevertheless, if you experiment you will see there is different feel about the water ingested first thing in the morning. The period without eating lets the body savour it, and if bowel emptying hasn't already occurred, facilitates that process.

### **2. Drink a glass of water 30 minutes before every meal.**

*Washing* the gastric tract is as important as washing hands before meal. Moreover, this water is a strategic addition to the hydration of the body, the timing of which recognizes that a lot of water is utilised for the digestion process. Drinking water independently of the eating process also helps us become more aware about the nutrition process. When we don't respect the two (drinking water & eating food) as separate processes, our body stops distinguishing clearly between hunger and thirst. If, when thirsty, we decide to drink a cup of tea, or coffee, *and* compound that error by eating a biscuit or cake, what's the effect? Basically, it's not quenching thirst – its food consumption.

### **3. Drink nothing while eating, or for 40 minutes after the meal.**

Water taken during a meal can dilute digestive juices and saliva. So either *no* water (or a *limited* amount- say 150ml- of room temperature water, sipped slowly, between bites of food) should be taken with meals. Air is essential for the digestive process as well, so the stomach should contain enough space not only for gastric juices but also for air. Half of the stomach should contain food, one quarter of it should be filled with digestive juices and the rest quarter filled with air. Digestion takes from half an hour to 3 hours depending on the type of food eaten.

At this point, the processed food enters the duodenum; then water can be ingested, with benefit.

**4. Drink a small glass of water 30 minutes before you go to sleep.**

The body eliminates toxins during the night. Also water is needed for respiration and sweating. A small glass (say 150ml) of water will help your sleep, not impede it, unlike a diuretic like tea or coffee.

**5. Drink water to satisfy thirst.**

The rule is: satisfy thirst with water and hunger with food. Distinguish between the two. Generally water for hydration has no added taste, although it should feel deeply satisfying when imbibed. So that means that soft drinks, coffee or tea are not the same as water even though they contain it. (These things have taste, so the body treats them as food).

Water can become ones simplest *Monday do-able* health strategy. Wellbeing results show up quickly. In two weeks of superior hydration, your colon becomes significantly more functional, in eight weeks inflammatory conditions begin to resolve, the gastric system self-regulates and chronic headaches recede.

**6. To encourage systematic, drinking water of water at the optimal times, here are some ideas about it.**

Two glasses of water upon waking up in the morning - helps activate internal organs; One glass of water - 30 minutes before meal - helps digestion; One glass of water - before taking a bath - helps lower blood pressure; One glass of water - before sleep - to avoid stroke/ heart attack

**7. Finally, the Stack principle for optimizing hydration**

Most people know that drinking more water would be good for them, but there is a difference between *knowing* and *doing*.

It's not just a case of drinking more water (although that will, in most cases, help).

It's **STACK-**

Meaning the drinking *Speed* (should be slow, small sips, spread out not quick. large gulps, all at once) the *Temperature* (should be room temperature, not cold), and *Amount* (around 500 ml in any one hour, a little more upon waking up; the kidneys cannot process more than 500 ml or so per hour), *Consistency* (its what one does most of the time that makes a difference); *Kidney* friendly (essentially this means drinking little and often, and gradually rehydrating -re training the body's hydration memory).

Having a colonic itself will help hydrate the body and well chosen implants (e.g. flaxseed tea) can then help maintain hydration. A colonic will help gently cleanse and hydrate the digestive system, break up dehydrated waste materials on the intestinal walls and prevent the re-absorption of toxic materials.

Remember, *TTT- things take time*. It can take the body weeks or months to rehydrate entirely, and it needs consistency of follow-through. Drinking loads one day and not much the next doesn't help much, consistent water drinking is the key. The mantra playing your mind about drinking water should be little and often throughout the day.