

Keeping your health and well-being in the know

# MyHealthTALK



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Courtesy of Asset Health

## Just Add Water

### The Health Benefits of Drinking H<sub>2</sub>O

We all have heard that drinking water is good for you but do you know all the benefits of drinking water? About 2/3 of the body consists of water and it is the body's principal chemical component. Tissues and organs are also mainly made up of water, the brain alone consists of 90% of water and muscle is 75% water. Water transports nutrients and oxygen into cells, moisturizes the air in lungs, helps with metabolism, helps to absorb nutrients and regulates body temperature.

Every cell in your body needs water and that is why it is important to drink enough fluids. How much water should you drink? Dietary recommendations from the Institute of Medicine advise that men should consume about 13 cups of total beverages a day and women should consume about 9 cups of total beverages. Keep in mind that some foods can be sources of water as well. Watermelon and tomatoes are 90% or more water by weight.

### Here are the top 10 Health Benefits of Drinking Water

1. Lose weight – Drinking water flushes down the byproducts of fat breakdown, reduces hunger, and water has zero calories.
2. Remedy for Headaches - Relieve headache and back pains due to dehydration.
3. Look Younger with Healthier Skin – Helps replenish skin tissues and moisturizes skin and increase elasticity.
4. Better Productivity at Work – Since your brain is mostly made of water, drinking water helps you think better be more alert and concentrate.
5. Better Exercise – Since water regulates your body temperature, you will feel more energetic when working out.
6. Digestion and Constipation – Water raises your metabolism to help with digestion.
7. Cramps and Sprains – Hydration helps keep your joints and muscles lubricated.
8. Less Likely to Get Sick and Feel Healthy – Drinking water helps fight against flu and other ailments like kidney stones and heart attack and can help improve your immune system.
9. Relieves Fatigue – Water is used by the body to help flush out toxins and waste products from the body.
10. Reduce the Risk of Cancer – Some studies show that drinking a healthy amount of water may reduce the risks of bladder and colon cancer.

Source: *Water: How much should you drink everyday?* By Mayo Clinic Staff  
*Top 11 Benefits of Drinking Water and How – mangosteens-natural-remedies.com*

## Take the Sting out of Spring

Bug stings and bites can annoy us all. Bee, hornet and wasp stings can often create a lot of pain. Mosquito bites may hurt less, but they can still be a nuisance or carry with them illnesses such as West Nile virus. As temperatures rise, follow these safety measures to protect yourself and your family from bites and stings:

- Try not to provoke insects or disturb their hives or nests.
- Use insect repellent outside.
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Fix window and door screens.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites, such as all forms of standing water.
- Keep grass and weeds cut short.

### Treat stings and bites

- Get rid of the stinger by scraping the back of a credit card or other straight-edged object across the stinger. Don't use tweezers, which can worsen the release of venom.
- Wash the site thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wrap ice in a washcloth, put it on-again, off-again for 10 minutes and repeat.
- Take an antihistamine or apply creams that reduce itching if needed.
- Watch for signs of infection (increasing redness, swelling or pain) over the next several days.
- Call 911, if someone experiences chest pain, a swollen face or mouth, and trouble swallowing or breathing after being bitten or stung.

Source: *Living Healthy Spring 2011*



# ARTICHOKES

There are plenty of reasons to heart artichokes. For starters, they pack in more disease-fighting antioxidants than any other vegetable: A study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* ranked them fourth in antioxidants, beating out blueberries and red wine. Thank cynarin and silymarin, liver nourishing phytonutrients that boost bile production for better vitamin absorption and fat metabolism. “Artichokes are natural detoxifiers that improve immunity and help prevent disease by lowering inflammation in the body,” says nutritionist Elissa Goodman. Research has also linked artichokes to lower cholesterol and reduced symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. Only 60 calories a pop, just one medium artichoke has 7 grams of fiber (that’s more than a half cup of prunes), as well as vitamins C and K, magnesium, folate and potassium for muscle, bone and heart health.

Globe is the most common variety, but artichokes come in a few different shapes and sizes. The long-stemmed version gives you more heart, while baby artichokes are missing the inedible center choke. Sure, it’s easy to grab the canned or jar versions, but beware of added fats, salt and preservatives; fresh is best for flavor and health, with frozen coming in a close second. Stuff them into paninis, add baby artichokes to pasta and pizza, or dip the leaves into guacamole, salsa or hummus.

Eating artichokes stimulates sweet receptors so that even water tastes sweeter afterward.

## HOW TO CHOOSE ARTICHOKES:

Choose artichokes that feel firm and heavy, and store them in a plastic bag in a crisper.

## HOW TO COOK ARTICHOKES:

**STEAMING:** Cut off stem ends and trim 1 inch off top of the artichokes. Rub stem and tip with half of a lemon. Arrange artichokes in steamer basket. Bring water to a boil, cover, reduce heat and steam 35 to 40 minutes or until stem end is easily pierced with a knife. Remove from heat and let cool 5 minutes.

**BOILING:** When boiling artichokes you lose some of the nutrition into the water and can overcook it where it becomes soggy and loses some flavor. Select a pan large enough to hold the artichokes upright. Lemons or garlic can be added to the cooking water for flavor. Boiling time depends upon the size but is typically around 45 minutes. Turn them upside down on a paper towel after boiling to eliminate any water from inside the leaves.

Source: [naturalhealthmag.com](http://naturalhealthmag.com)

## Summer Fun

Most of us would agree that it was a very long winter. As the weather warms up, people want to get outside to enjoy the fresh air and soak up the Vitamin D. Take advantage of the longer days and weekends to plan some time outdoors, whether it is alone or with friends and family.

After a long day at work, you might find some stress relief in working in your garden. Not only will the fresh air and physical work benefit you, the reward of beautiful flowers and tasty vegetables are a bonus. Another activity you can do in the early evening is to take a bike ride, alone or with others. This is a good activity for varying levels of physical stamina. Everyone can participate at their own pace. If none of these options sound good, you can unwind on the patio with a glass of lemonade and a good book.

Weekends tend to lend themselves to planned gatherings. Invite some friends or family over for a barbeque. You can also incorporate activities such as swimming, bocce ball, or Frisbee. It’s always nice to visit with people in a relaxed, outdoor setting.

For those that enjoy a little more strenuous physical activity, play a round of golf, take a long walk or run, or join a pickup basketball game.

Take advantage of the good weather, relax, and reconnect with people.