

Water great, but won't help burn fat

I read recently that you should drink a lot of water to help your liver burn fat — if you don't drink enough, the kidneys use up all the water. The same source said other beverages aren't digested the same way and won't help. That's not what I've heard before; what's right?

This just goes to show that you can't believe everything you read. Nutrition faculty at Ohio State University explain that the liver doesn't need water to metabolize fat. It's 80 percent water anyway, and actually produces water as a side effect of metabolizing fat. The thought that your kidneys might "use up" all the water before the liver can do its job is nonsense.

Furthermore, beverages are beverages, and the body treats them all pretty much the same. True, both alcohol and caffeine are diuretics, and cause your body to eliminate some of the fluid you consume. But for the most part, other beverages are just as good as

water to help your body get the fluid it needs.

You can also get water from the food you eat. Bread is 36 percent water. Pasta is 66 percent water.

Most fruits and vegetables are 85 percent to 95 percent water.

It's a good thing there's so much water in the diet. The body needs it. Water helps dissolve chemical compounds so your body can use them. It also serves as a medium where chemical reactions can take place — and the body is a veritable 24-hour-a-day laboratory bustling with such reactions. Water also helps control body heat through perspiration. Dehydration is a serious problem if you don't get enough liquids.

All this means that a glass of plain, old-fashioned water would be a fine component of anyone's diet. It's refreshing and calorie-, caffeine- and sodium-free. But if the only time you drink plain water is when you brush your teeth, neither your liver or your scale will mind it a bit. Water won't burn fat.

Does drinking water with meals help fill you up faster?

It's not a bad habit, but researchers are finding that "eating" water is an even better way to help you cut calories.

Most foods have some water in them — some foods more than others. In a study in a recent issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers reported that foods with higher water content helped study participants feel fuller while consuming fewer calories. Their conclusion: Filling

up on foods with a higher water content can help you reduce calories without feeling hungry.

The researchers served meals one day a week for four weeks to 24 study participants. At lunch, each participant ate a first course that consisted of chicken rice casserole, the same casserole with a glass of water, or a bowl of chicken rice soup. The soup was made of exactly the ingredients in the casserole plus the glass of water. However, the participants who got the soup ate fewer calories during the rest of the meal. The soup helped curb their appetite more than the casserole alone or the casserole with a glass of water.

This could be why a bowl of cooked oatmeal, which has absorbed a lot of water, is more filling than a breakfast bar made with the same amount of oats.

Soup, of course, is a good example of a water-rich food, but most fruits and vegetables are high in water content, too. Unfortunately, water content isn't listed on Nutrition Facts labels, but you can find it in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Database (http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut_search.pl). There, you can look up specific foods for their nutrient content — water is listed first. For example, raw zucchini is 95 percent water by weight; raw tomatoes are 94 percent water. Raw oranges are 87 percent water, raw apples are 84 percent water. On the other hand, white bread is 36 percent water; toasted, it's 30 percent water.

Generally, this is more evidence that adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet is a good thing, especially if you're trying to cut calories.

Ida's Notebook

by
Ida Risser



There are advantages and disadvantages to keeping "everything." Over the years I have kept all the letters that were sent to me. Now I can sort them and give them back to the people that wrote them 50 years ago. They are like a diary of their daily living. Of course, they have cluttered up my house all these years.

If my ancestors had not kept their letters, I would not have them to enjoy today. One letter written in the mid 1800's talks of all the stones that they had to pick up from the fields. Today our grandsons have the same job as the stones seem to multiply from year to year.

Recently, a man came to see me who is writing a book on the history of our township. Due to

keeping "everything", I have records of local mills, books on local turnpikes and many old pictures. When I want a certain picture, I do have to sort through a trunk that is almost full of photos.

For eight years I worked in an office in Lancaster. From this place I accumulated more papers and letters, which now are part of its history. A reunion is planned and I was able to find a lot of records of times past. Even I am surprised at the number of pictures that were taken 60 years ago.

It is a pleasure to share these items that I saved and those that my great grandparents saved. There would not be antiques today if someone had not cared enough to preserve them.

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