

Why hydration is as important as nutrition in a balanced diet

Lucy ROGER*

Department of Animal Sciences, The Ohio State University, Columbus, United States of America

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DESCRIPTION

When it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, most people often focus on nutrition, ensuring that they are eating the right foods in the right quantities. While nutrition is certainly important for overall health, hydration is just as important and often overlooked. Water plays a vital role in almost every bodily function and its significance should be emphasized as part of a balanced diet. Mental performance is also significantly influenced by hydration. Dehydration can lead to difficulty concentrating, poor memory and irritability. Proper hydration, like nutrition, is fundamental for sustaining energy, enhancing bodily functions and promoting long-term health.

Water is the most important nutrient in the body, making up about 60% of an adult's body weight. It is involved in various essential functions, including digestion, temperature regulation, nutrient absorption and waste elimination. Without adequate hydration, the body cannot function optimally. Water is necessary for the transport of nutrients throughout the body, enabling the proper functioning of cells, tissues and organs. Additionally, it helps in the regulation of body temperature, especially during physical activity or in hot weather, by allowing the body to sweat and cool down. Without sufficient hydration, the body's ability to regulate temperature diminishes, increasing the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heatstroke.

A major aspect of a balanced diet is the body's ability to absorb and utilize nutrients effectively. Water plays a significant role in the digestion and absorption of food. It

aids in breaking down food so that the body can absorb essential nutrients like vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Additionally, water is essential for maintaining the health of the gastrointestinal system. Dehydration can lead to constipation, which disrupts regular bowel movements and can cause discomfort. By drinking enough water, digestion is more efficient and the body can better process and utilize the nutrients from the foods we consume.

Just like nutrition, hydration is vital for physical performance. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, reduced endurance and slower reaction times. Whether it's for exercising, working, or simply going about daily activities, adequate hydration is necessary to maintain energy levels and optimal performance. When the body is dehydrated, the blood volume decreases, which makes it harder for the heart to pump oxygen and nutrients to muscles and organs. This can result in cramps, dizziness and even fainting during physical activity. Maintaining hydration ensures that the body has the energy and stamina needed for peak performance.

The benefits of proper hydration extend far beyond the immediate effects on energy and cognition. Over time, chronic dehydration can lead to serious health problems. It can contribute to kidney stones, urinary tract infections and even kidney failure. Additionally, inadequate water intake has been linked to increased risk of heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Even mild dehydration can impair cognitive function and affect mood, making it harder to focus or complete tasks effectively. Proper hydration can help prevent these long-term conditions by maintaining the balance of essential bodily functions and promoting overall wellness.

In conclusion, hydration is an essential component

Correspondence to:

Lucy ROGER, Email: lusy@osu.edu

of a balanced diet that is just as important as proper nutrition. It supports numerous bodily functions, enhances the absorption of nutrients, aids in digestion and improves both physical and mental performance. Proper hydration helps maintain mental clarity and emotional stability, supporting the brain's ability to

perform at its best. As important as eating the right foods, drinking enough water ensures that the body is able to function optimally and maintain long-term health. As such, we must recognize the importance of hydration and make it an integral part of our daily dietary habits.