

## **DRINK MORE WATER!**

By Jilian Shitaker M.D. - Director of the Whitaker Wellness Institute.

### **Dehydration: The Root of Disease?**

Several years ago Bob, a Health and Healing subscriber, came across the work of Fereydoon Batmanghelidj, M.D., a physician in Falls Church, Virginia, with a revolutionary idea about the origins of illness. In his book, **YOUR BODY'S MANY CRIES FOR WATER**, Dr. Batmanghelidj proposed that dehydration is an underlying cause of most of the diseases afflicting mankind. According to Dr. Batmanghelidj, increased water intake is a powerful therapy for many of these disorders, including, headaches, hypertension, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, ulcers, angina, obesity, and neck and back pain.

This theory made a lot of sense to Bob, and he began sharing it with anyone who would listen. His faith in the concept quickly grew as he witnessed dozens of "water cures" in friends and acquaintances who suffered with ailments ranging from mild (dandruff and heartburn) to serious (cancer and multiple sclerosis).

I can relate to Bob's excitement about Dr. Batmanghelidj's theories. In medical school, I had been taught that water was essentially an inert substance-necessary, of course, but primarily as a carrier for the far more important things that are dissolved in it. But think about it: water makes up 70 percent of our magnificently engineered bodies, and while we can survive for months without food, we can last only days without water. So when I encountered the hypothesis that water – or a deficiency of it- may be a factor in disease, I thought the doctor might be onto something.

### **PATIENTS IMPROVED SIMPLY BY DRINKING WATER**

I decided to test Dr. Batmanghelidj's theory at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, initiating a standard recommendation to all our patients to drink a minimum of 8 and preferably 10 to 12 glasses of water every day. I also wrote about it in Health and Healing. I have witnessed remarkable recoveries in scores of patients and subscribers.

A subscriber from Canada reported that years of seasonal migraines (occurring primarily during the summer when he was more likely to be dehydrated) disappeared after he upped his water intake.

After only four days of drinking eight glasses of water, eight-year-old Jeremy's asthma cleared up to the extent that he was able to discontinue all of his medications. Within one month his lung capacity increased from 60 percent of normal to 120 percent. Arthritis, ulcers, edema, even blood pressure... I've seen them all improve with water.

## **NO MIRACLE, JUST COMMON SENSE.**

At the first glance, these may seem to be miracle cures. But an understanding of the mechanisms of these diseases easily explains the “water cure”. Adequate hydration ensures normal blood flow, relieving migraines, and keeps at bay the triggers, such as histamine, that prompt an asthma attack.

Improvements in the aches and pains of arthritis also make sense, given the 85 percent of the cartilage and virtually all of the synovial fluid lubricating the joints is water. Drinking water also restores the protective mucous membranes of the GI tract, soothing ulcers and other stomach problems. **Furthermore, water is nature's best diuretic—nothing makes you lose excess fluid like drinking a lot of water.**

## **RESEARCH IS CATCHING UP**

Dr. Batmanghelidj's theory may sound simplistic to some. However, over the past couple years a number of scientists have been seriously evaluating the merits of water. And as it turns out, Dr. Batmanghelidj may have the last laugh. Here are a few of the recent studies.

**Cancer:** a 1999 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine examined the association between risk of bladder cancer and fluid intake in almost 48,000 men over ten years. The men who drank **the most water had the lowest risk of developing cancer.**

**Asthma:** Frank J. Cerny, Ph.D., and colleagues from the University of Buffalo, presenting at the June 2000 American College of Sports Medicine meeting, reported that exercise induced asthma (which is very common in asthmatics) is caused by water loss from airways – and can be prevented by pre – exercise hydration.

**Heart Disease and Stroke.** A study of 34,000 Seventh Day Adventists revealed that individuals who drank a minimum of five glasses of water a day had half the risk of heart attack and stroke as those who drank only two glasses daily. The researchers reported that adequate hydration decreased the viscosity or stickiness, of the blood and improved blood flow.

**Kidney Stones.** Gary C. Curhan, M.D., of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, has found that eight to ten glasses of fluids a day decreases the likelihood of developing kidney stones. Water dilutes the urine, minimizing the risk of the formation of crystals that can cause kidney stones.

**Constipation:** An Italian study found that in patients eating a high fiber diet (25 grams per day) as a therapy for constipation, increasing fluid intake to 1.5 to 2 liters per day (6-8 cups) significantly improved the condition, compared to fiber alone.

## HOW MUCH WATER ARE YOU DRINKING?

We all know that drinking more water is also important in weight control. If you are drinking at least eight eight-ounce glasses of water every day, you're a rare bird. A survey conducted earlier this year by the Rockefeller University in New York found that only 34 percent of Americans drink this much. Most average six glasses, and almost ten percent confessed to drinking no water at all!

Even worse, most of us drink more than our share of caffeinated beverages such as coffee, tea, and soda, as well as alcohol (Americans average 41 gallons of soda each, per year). These beverages have diuretic properties and actually increase water losses. Some experts, including Dr. Batmanghelidj, contend that for every such beverage, you should drink an additional glass of water.

Summertime heat increases your water needs, so this is a good time to get into the lifelong, year-round habit of drinking enough water to keep your body hydrated and healthy.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER

Drink a minimum of 64 ounces of water every day. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink water. Keep filled water bottles, glasses at your desk, in your car, by your bed, and near your favorite chair as a reminder.

For more information on how drinking more water can help with back pain, or with disc problems, please get a copy of Dr. Batmanghelidji's book, **YOUR BODY'S MANY CRIES FOR WATER**.

Dr. Sarno publishes another great book on this subject.

I hope you enjoy this information.

Warmly,

*Diane Ulicsni*