

Water and Quitting Smoking

Water helps you stay healthy and it is important to replace the water our bodies use. This factsheet explains why water is important for good health, especially when quitting smoking.

What is so good about water?

- Australian tap water is the best drink. It has no added sugar, is inexpensive, tastes good and is safe to drink.
- Soft drinks, cordials, fruit juices, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks contain added sugar and can lead to weight gain and can damage your teeth. Water is the best option.
- Water can help digestion. This helps to prevent constipation, something smokers often complain of when quitting.
- It is recommended that people exercise when quitting smoking. It is important to drink water to keep hydrated when exercising.
- Water carries nutrients and oxygen around the body
- Water helps keep your skin, mouth, nose and lungs from drying out.

How will water help when quitting smoking?

- When having a craving for a cigarette, one method to beat the craving is to keep your mouth and hands busy. Sipping on water throughout the day can help do this.
- Thirst can often be confused with hunger. So before snacking, try drinking a glass of water first.
- People often eat snacks to combat cravings. If the snacks are high in fat and sugar they can lead to weight gain. Try drinking water first.
- Drinking water improves alertness and the ability to concentrate. This can help your willpower to remain strong and fight the urge to smoke.
- As dehydration makes you tired, you are less likely to have the motivation to prepare and eat healthy meals, which increases the chances of weight gain.

Handy hints for drinking more water:

Increasing your daily water intake does not have to be a difficult task. Here are some simple ways to drink more water throughout the day:

- Choose water in place of drinks with added sugars or alcohol. Tea and coffee provide water too, but can make you dehydrated.
- Have a glass of water before or with every meal.
- Have a glass of water with you next to your home computer or TV.
- Flavour your water with lemon or orange slices or tea.
- Carry a refillable water bottle with you for easy access.

Are you drinking enough?

Thirst is a good indicator of when a person needs to drink water. However, thirst can often be confused with hunger. So before snacking, try drinking a glass of water first.

If a person does not drink enough water, a person can become dehydrated and may experience:

- Feeling of thirst and hunger
- Headaches, tiredness and confusion
- Dark-coloured urine.

Exercising provides a short burst of energy to help manage withdrawal symptoms when quitting smoking. It is important to drink more water when exercising.

For more information visit:

- http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Water_a_vital_nutrient?open
- <http://www.wellness.uci.edu/water.html>.