

# Road to Better Health

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Health & Wellness  
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Located at **Pilot** 

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## Ask the Nurse Practitioner



### Dehydration

Q: Are there some drinks that cause dehydration?

A: Caffeine is a diuretic, meaning that water loss can occur from excessive consumption. Caffeine is found in soda as well as tea and coffee, and some energy drinks.

Q: Can I drink alcohol, and not worry about dehydration?

A: Alcohol in moderation will not cause dehydration, however in excess it will act as a diuretic.

Q: How much water should I drink daily?

A: The Institute of Medicine recommends that men drink 3 liters (13 cups) of water daily, and women drink 2.2 liters (9 cups) of water daily.

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## Time to Dispel the Bad Rap of the Nap

Napping has long been regarded the undisputed territory of kindergartners, old people, sick people, slackers, or simply those with little regard for the sanctity of a good night's sleep. Lately though, naps have been shaking their bad rap as research is discovering some surprising health benefits. When carefully managed, according to the National Sleep Foundation, naps can restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness 100%. Naps can increase alertness in the period directly following the nap and may extend alertness a few hours later in the day.

Daytime Sleepiness can occur for a variety of reasons. Our biological clocks (circadian rhythms) which orchestrate the daily ups and down of our physiological processes (body temperature, blood pressure, digestion) program a little "hump" of afternoon sleepiness. An afternoon nap is one way to accommodate that "hump". A 2008 study that compared getting more nighttime sleep, taking a nap, and using caffeine as ways to cope with the afternoon hump indicated that the nap was most effective.

The number of hours you've been awake can also contribute to daytime sleepiness.



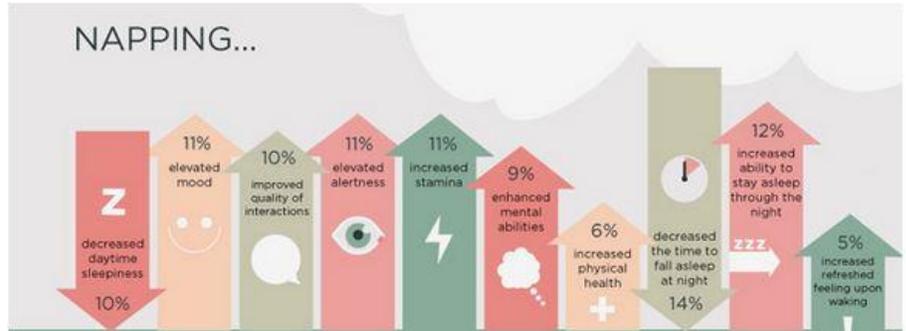
After about 16 consecutive hours without sleep, most people start to feel tired (homeostatic sleep drive). Ideally, this sleep drive is in sync with our circadian rhythm so they're mutually reinforcing. But if you work a night shift, or have problems sleeping at night, the 16-hour allotment of wakefulness may begin and end, earlier. This can set you up for grogginess in the late afternoon or early evening. A short nap won't completely reset the timer, but it can buy you some time before the grogginess sets in again.

*Time to Dispel the Bad Rap of the Nap continued on next page*

## Time to Dispel the Bad Rap of the Nap (continued)

Naps can also help combat some of the negative health effects of sleep deprivation...such as controlling your appetite. A Stanford University study found that a lack of sleep triggers your body's production of the hormone ghrelin, which makes you want to eat more, and lowers levels of the hormone leptin, which tells you when you're full. Sleep deprivation also negatively impacts the frontal lobe of your brain leading to impairment of judgment, impulse control, and social/sexual behavior.

Finally, a whole host of chronic diseases are currently thought to be fueled by sleep deprivation including diabetes, obesity, and heart disease, according to studies conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Scientists think people who sleep less are more stressed out, which may contribute to the development of these conditions.



Recommendations from Harvard Health on how to take a good nap:

**Keep it short.** The 20- to 30-minute nap may be the ideal pick-me-up. Even just napping for a few minutes has benefits. Longer naps can lead to sleep inertia (the post-sleep grogginess that can be difficult to shake off) or interfere with nighttime sleep.

**HOW TO NAP EFFECTIVELY**

- NAP TIME**  
Prime nap time is from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., when your energy level dips due to a rise in the hormone melatonin at that time of day.
- DARKNESS**  
Use a face mask or eye pillow to provide darkness to make your nap more effective.
- NOT TOO LATE**  
Napping within three hours of bedtime may interfere with night time sleep.
- QUIET PLACE**  
Assure that you will not be disturbed for the duration of your nap.
- SET AN ALARM**  
You will eventually train yourself to nap for the amount of time you set aside. Until then, set an alarm or ask someone to wake you up.
- 30 MIN MAX**  
When taking a nap longer than 30 minutes, you run the risk of heading into deep sleep, which will leave you feeling tired and groggy. Naps as short as 1 to 2 minutes could be effective for some people.
- THE CAFFEINE NAP**  
Some people claim that drinking coffee and then taking an immediate nap works well. The effect of caffeine kicks in somewhere between 10 and 20 minutes, waking them up. They feel extra energy from both the nap and the coffee. Researchers in Japan found that subjects using a caffeine nap rated highest in decreased sleepiness and increased productivity when compared to subjects taking a nap and washing their face, or taking a nap and being exposed to bright lights.

**Find a dark, quiet, cool place.** You don't want to waste a lot of time getting to sleep. Reducing light and noise helps most people nod off faster. Cool temperatures are helpful, too.

**Plan on it.** Waiting till daytime sleepiness gets so bad that you have to take a nap can be uncomfortable and dangerous if, say, you're driving. A regular nap time may also help you get to sleep faster and wake up quicker. Practice makes perfect, and it is no different with napping!

**Time your caffeine.** Caffeine takes some time to kick in. A small Japanese study published several years ago found that drinking a caffeinated beverage and then taking a short nap immediately afterward was the most restful combination because the sleep occurred just before the caffeine took effect. We're not so sure about that approach — the mere suggestion of caffeine, in the form of coffee taste or smell, wakes us up. Regardless of the exact timing, you need to coordinate caffeine intake with your nap.

**Don't feel guilty!** The well-timed nap can make you more productive at work and at home

## Dehydration: Symptoms, Prevention and Treatment

By Patricia Smith, FNP – Knoxville, TN

Dehydration occurs when the body loses more water than it takes in. Vomiting, diarrhea, the use of drugs that increase urine excretion (diuretics), profuse sweating (for example, during heat waves, particularly with prolonged exertion), and decreased water intake can lead to dehydration. At first, dehydration stimulates the thirst center of the brain, causing thirst, a powerful motivator for people to drink more fluids. If water intake does not keep up with water loss, dehydration becomes more severe. Sweating decreases, and less urine is excreted.



Water moves from inside the cells to the bloodstream to maintain the needed amount of blood (blood volume) and blood pressure. If dehydration continues, tissues of the body begin to dry out, and cells begin to shrivel and malfunction.

**Symptoms of mild to moderate dehydration include:** Dry or sticky mouth, Not urinating much, Darker yellow urine, Dry, cool skin, Headache, Muscle cramps and Thirst.

**Symptoms of severe dehydration include:** Not urinating, or very dark yellow or amber-colored urine, Dry, shriveled skin, Irritability or confusion, Dizziness or lightheadedness, Rapid heartbeat, Breathing rapidly, Sunken eyes, Listlessness, Shock (lack of blood flow through the body), Unconsciousness or delirium, and potentially, can lead to coma.

**Your health care provider will look for these signs of dehydration:**

- Low blood pressure
- Blood pressure that drops when you stand up after lying down
- White finger tips that do not return to a pink color after applying pressure
- Skin that is not as elastic as normal.. When your health care provider pinches it into a fold, it may slowly sag back into place. Normally, skin springs back right away.
- Rapid heart rate

**Ways to prevent dehydration:**

- Adults should drink at least 6 glasses of fluids daily (including fluid from eating foods high in water content, such as fruits and vegetables)
- Fluid intake should be increased on hot days and during or after prolonged exercise
- Flavored sports drinks have been formulated to replace electrolytes lost during vigorous exercise. These drinks can be used to prevent dehydration

**Dehydration treatment:**

- For treating mild dehydration, drinking plenty of water may be all that is needed
- With moderate and severe dehydration, lost electrolytes (especially sodium and potassium) must also be replaced
- More severe dehydration requires treatment by doctors with intravenous solutions containing sodium chloride. The intravenous solution is given rapidly at first and then more slowly as the physical condition improves

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## The Wellness Corner: Eat to Stay Hydrated

Drinking water isn't the only way to stay hydrated. According to the Institute of Medicine 20% of your daily water intake comes from food. And the added benefit of body nourishing nutrients is a bonus to consuming these foods on a daily basis.

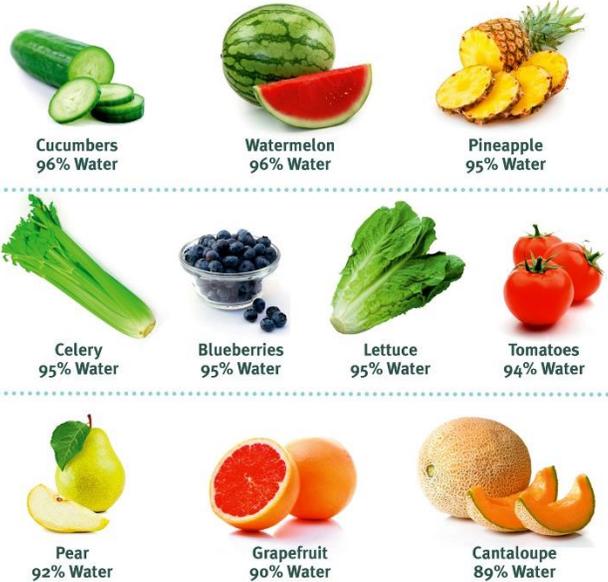
### Fruit

Fruit is the most obvious choice for adding water to your diet. Watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes, and citrus contain upwards of 96% water content. Throw in the beneficial nutrients and fiber contained in most fruit and you have not only added variety and taste to your hydration plan but also health enhancing dietary substance.

### Vegetables

Not as obvious as fruit, but nearly as hydration packed (i.e., cucumbers at 96%), vegetables provide incredible nutritional punch. While it may not seem juicy, broccoli is 90% water...and contains compounds called isothiocyanates which block a defective gene which causes cells to become cancerous. Tomatoes, at 94% water content, contain lycopene...studies link this antioxidant to a reduced risk of lung, stomach, prostate, breast, colon, and cervical cancer. One cup of cooked beans (like kidney, pinto, and garbanzo) provides a half cup of water, as much protein as two eggs, and half your daily fiber needs. Fiber keeps your digestive system moving, helps lower cholesterol, and controls appetite.

## Top 10 Hydrating Foods



### Soup and sauces

An obvious answer to serious hydration needs....soups can do wonders at hydrating. A favorite of flu-sufferers...chicken noodle soup (also nicknamed Jewish penicillin) is typically broth based and packed with vegetables. Chili and other bean based soups pack high fiber and nutritional content along with hydration providing hunger abating power. And the typical, store-bought tomato sauce is 90% water and only 50 calories per half cup serving size.

## About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel (UCT), in partnership with Pilot Flying J, addresses one of the trucking industry's biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UCT clinics offer Occupational Medical services (DOT/non-DOT physicals, workers comp, sleep apnea screening, urine/hair drug screens, etc.) and Primary/Urgent Care services (chronic disease screening and management (e.g. diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension), blood pressure checks, Men's & Women's wellness exams, wound care, cold/cough/flu, upper respiratory infections, sinus infections, ear infections, muscle pain/strain, etc.).

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970 Cassville-White Rd NE  
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699 State Route 203  
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(618) 215-5114

