Stay Hydrated – Stay Healthy

Keeping your body hydrated helps your heart more easily pump blood through the blood vessels to your muscles. It also helps your muscles flush out waste and lactic acid build-up so they can work more efficiently. But how much water do you need? The American Heart Association recommends not waiting until you’re thirsty to drink water. If you feel thirsty, that is a sign you’re already dehydrated. The easiest way to gauge your hydration level is to pay attention to the color of your urine; pale and clear means you’re hydrated.

Knowing When Your Stomach is Full

Your body is equipped to know when you have had enough food. Feeling full is a result of your brain reacting to chemicals released in your body when you put food or drink in your stomach. Your brain takes around 20 minutes to register these chemicals, and these chemical levels can continue to rise over 10-30 minutes after your meal. These chemicals stay elevated for three to five hours, keeping you satisfied. As the chemical levels fall, the feeling of hunger returns. If you’re looking to eat less during meals, drink a full glass of water 10 minutes before sitting down to eat; your brain will signal that you are fuller earlier.

Healthy Snack Ideas

Making a change in your diet can leave you feeling hungrier as your body adjusts to your new eating schedule. Try these healthy 100-calorie snacks to help curb your hunger in between meals:

- 1 cup sliced bananas and fresh raspberries (or any fruit)
- 2 cups of baby carrots
- 3 ½ cups air-popped popcorn
- 1 cup whole-grain cereal

Next Steps

1. Read “Healthy Hydration”
2. Read “Healthy Snacks – 100 Calories or Less”
3. Take the Chapter 5 quiz

Remember

Drinking a glass of water 10 minutes before every meal can help you control portions.