



# HEALTH Matters

Vol 1 Issue 11 | August 2012

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Stress



## Drink to Your Health

### THE WATER AND MOOD CONNECTION

It is a well known fact that water is essential for living and for all vital cellular functions. But new research has revealed that even slight degrees of dehydration can lead to more than just a dry mouth and throat. Studies have shown that a 1-2% reduction of water volume can lead to a difficulty in concentrating, incite mood changes, crankiness, headaches and fatigue. The human body undergoes visible and invisible water losses in the form of sweat, urine, bowel waste as well as respiratory losses. The body's normal thirst sensation also becomes apparent at a dehydration level of 1-2%. Mild dehydration has also been known to cause lack of energy and tiredness.

To check the level of hydration, a simple test is to observe the color of urine. Normally urine output should have a good volume and a light to straw color. The darker the color of urine, the more dehydrated you are. (\*Urine color can also be altered by certain foods, medicines, vitamins etc.)

### HOW MUCH WATER IS ENOUGH?

For most people, the thumb rule is to drink approximately 2 liters water a day or 8 glasses of 250 ml each. This can be in the form of water as well as beverages like juices, coffee, soups, tea etc. Food provides approximately 20% of the body's water requirements. Water needs vary among individuals based on certain conditions and lifestyle. The following cause an increased demand for hydration:

- After moderate exercise
- Hot, humid weather and high altitudes
- Acute illnesses like diarrhoea, bleeding, vomiting etc.
- Pregnancy and breastfeeding
- A larger BMI or an above average body frame

So stay hydrated to improve your mood. Keep a water bottle handy, wherever you go.



## Editorial

Welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Health Matters!

Did you know that staying well-hydrated is not just for athletes? Research suggests that even slight degrees of dehydration can make you moody. Read this month's article about the least advertised and most essential beverage - Water!

Six packs or family pack abs? We tackle belly fat in our feature about waist management.

Supermarket health food aisles and health digests don't talk enough about Probiotics. We discuss how these 'friendly' bacteria help human health and how you can benefit from their use.

If you are feeling guilty about sneakily taking an afternoon nap, don't be. Research has proven that it does wonders for mental health and performance.

Thanks for your continuing patronage. Please send us your valuable feedback and comments. Write to us at [editorial@ttkhealthcareservices.com](mailto:editorial@ttkhealthcareservices.com)

For private circulation



Diet



# Probiotics - The Kiss of Good Health?

## SO WHAT ARE PROBIOTICS?

There has been a lot of hype and talk about Probiotics in the last decade. Probiotics are live organisms which when taken in adequate amounts are beneficial for the host. The human body is a host for many diverse groups of bacteria which coexist and help in bodily functions like digestion and absorption of nutrients such as Iron, Magnesium and Copper. These bacteria also contribute to the production of Vitamin B and K. They also keep the gastrointestinal and genitourinary milieu in harmony without which the host can become prone to infections.

## WHO NEEDS THEM AND HOW DO THEY HELP?

Probiotic supplements have been found to be useful in select groups of people with bowel and genitourinary infections or those suffering from compromised immunity. Some conditions in which they have proven to be beneficial are -

- Acute diarrhoea
- Inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease and Ulcerative Colitis
- Genitourinary infections
- Any chronic ailment leading to reduced food intake, malabsorption of food or slowed digestion

Long term use in normal populations has not been studied; however Probiotics are classified as GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe). The most studied Probiotic bacterial strains are Lactobacillus Rhamnosus, Bifidobacteria, Saccharomyces and Lactobacillus strain Shirota (Yakult). Preliminary studies have shown its benefits in cardiovascular disease, allergies, smokers, prevention of diarrhoea in children etc., but it is yet to be researched further.

## WHAT AMOUNTS OF PROBIOTICS ARE BENEFICIAL?


'CFU' is a Colony Forming Unit i.e., number of live bacteria in the product. You need at least one billion live




bacteria per dose for it to be effective.

## DOES EVERYONE NEED PROBIOTIC SUPPLEMENTS?


Probiotics can be consumed through natural foods. Modern pasteurization and preservation techniques, however, strip the Probiotics from food and thus consumption through food is occasionally not sufficient. Some Indian foods which are good natural sources of Probiotics -

 *Homemade yoghurt or dahi, paneer, buttermilk, sour cream, dahi vada etc. Traditional Indian foods go through natural fermentation and are, therefore, rich in Probiotics.*

 *Honey - There is a correlation between honey and the growth of Bifidobacterium cells in the intestines which may improve the health of the gastrointestinal tract.*

 *Idli, dosa, dhokla prepared after fermenting dough.*

 *Brine-cured pickled vegetables (unpasteurized).*

 *Dark chocolate (can be fortified with Probiotics) - Adding Probiotics in chocolate has no influence on the taste and texture of the chocolate. Probiotics in chocolate ensure the survival of up to four times as many good bacteria as those contained in dairy substrates.*

Probiotics taken through food are the best natural way of keeping the body healthy and preventing infections. However, if resorting to supplements, please check the CFU count, date and shelf life of the product and storage recommendations as excessive heat can make these products ineffective.







# Bust Those Flabby Abs

Do you find excuses to flaunt your midriff or do you hide it? Belly fat is not just a cosmetic problem but also a serious threat to health due to its strong association with ailments like Diabetes, Hypertension, Heart Diseases

and Syndrome X. Belly fat is actually of two types:



Subcutaneous fat is just beneath the skin and is not related to any ailment. It protects the

vital organs against extreme temperatures. It is the fat you can pinch with the skin and can be reduced by calorie restriction and exercise.

Visceral fat is deep-seated hard fat packed between abdominal organs. Excess visceral fat is linked to Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Diseases and Syndrome X. In this case, intense exercise is required to tone up the weakened abdominal wall and reduce excess fat.

A 'Beer Belly' is not caused by excessive alcohol intake but by a visceral over accumulation of fat – excessive calorie intake. A beer belly that measures more than 35 inches in women and more than 40 inches in men is directly associated with serious health conditions.

## TONE UP THE FLABBY ABDOMEN

Start with a good breakfast. Increase your protein intake and decrease the total number of calories by 200-500. Avoid saturated fat which means fried, packaged and fast foods. A balanced home-cooked diet comprising of whole grain - wheat, ragi, brown rice, oats, pulses, vegetables and fruits give you a good mix of protein, complex carbohydrates, low saturated fat, high micronutrients and probiotics. Egg whites and lean meat are good for non-vegetarians. Avoid rich curries as they tend to have excessive fat and salt. Snack on nuts and fruits

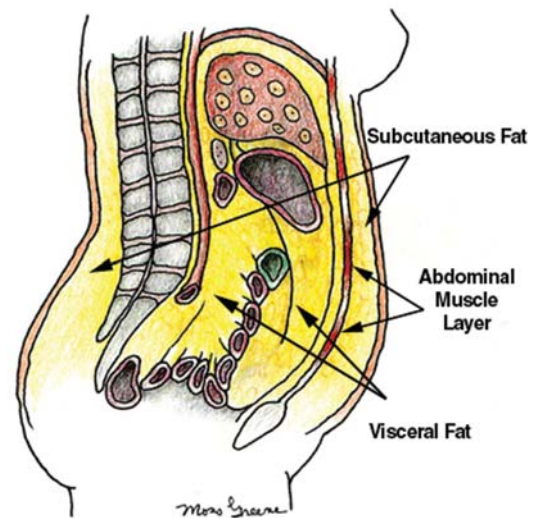
during breaks between meals. Eat 5 to 6 small meals a day instead of 3 big meals. Substitute juices with whole fruit.

It is important to focus on core muscles with Yoga or Pilates. Cardio training like aerobics, dancing or playing sports helps perk up the metabolic rate. Brisk walking (up to 10,000 steps a day), jogging, swimming or cycling helps penetrate the fat faster.

Stop drinking excessive alcohol or sodas that add on empty calories leading to abdominal fat deposition.

Reduce stress; increased stress means increased cortisol levels leading to higher likelihood of central obesity. Adequate sleep of 7-8 hours a day is important.

Do not starve or crash diet. The body misinterprets a crash diet as a starvation state and turns on its 'survival' mode of storing more fat.



It takes 7 seconds for food to travel from the mouth to the stomach and years to melt the extra flab. Make prudent choices when it comes to your food, exercise routines, sleep cycles and lifestyle. Do not try to achieve instant results. Set a regime and follow it consistently so that your body gets a clear message of your commitment to health.



Health



# The Science of Power Naps

Recent research has suggested that a power nap improves the brain's learning processes and performance ability. It has been observed that people going through a full day training session show lower grasping and learning abilities as the session progresses. Brain recordings during naps have revealed REM sleep activity which prevents burnout, refreshing the brain's learning and processing ability. NASA's research suggests that by taking short sleeps or 'powernaps' you can help reenergize your body and improve alertness as well as concentration ability. In Japan, it is an accepted practice to engage in 'Inemuri' - i.e. power naps at work. In fact, Tokyo has capsule hotels and napping salons for this purpose.

## WHAT IS A 'POWER NAP'?

A natural sleepiness sets in at mid day after 8 hours of being awake. A short mid day nap of 20 minutes to an hour is referred to as a 'Power nap' which gives a boost

to the brain, decreases stress levels, improves the mood and also the brain's cognitive ability.

## POWER NAP VS. CAFFEINE

Caffeine causes a short-term increased attentiveness but it also has a negative effect on memory and focus, eventually leading to crankiness and fatigue. Power naps, on the other hand, are a natural way to refresh the brain.

## HOW TO TAKE A POWER NAP

It is important to avoid heavy meals, high sugar foods and caffeine at least two hours prior to a nap session. A dark room causes production of Melatonin, a hormone which induces sleep. And remember, 20 to 45 minutes of napping is enough because an extended session may cause sleep inertia (i.e., grogginess and sluggishness). So if you are feeling slightly sluggish after lunch, don't fight it, a power nap may help.



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