

# Fact Sheet - Dehydration

## Dehydration – And The Essential Nutrient!

**Flavour Creations recognizes the vital importance of adequate water consumption for clients, to prevent dehydration and to maintain normal and healthy bodily function.**

### Overview of Water

Water constitutes approximately 60 percent of an adult's body weight. It is the most pivotal nutrient for all bodily processes to ensure consistency and balance within the body, known as homeostasis. The delicate but controlled state of homeostasis is performed by water, using the following actions

<sup>1</sup>.

- Carrying nutrients and waste products throughout the body
- Maintaining the structure of large molecules such as proteins and glycogen
- Assisting the conduction of metabolic reactions
- Acting as a solvent for minerals, vitamins, amino acids, glucose and other small molecules.
- Lubricating and cushioning joints, the eyes, the spinal cord
- Aiding in the regulation of body temperature
- And maintaining blood volume

### Dehydration

Deficiency in water is known as dehydration and is the condition by which water loss from the body is higher than water intake. Symptoms of dehydration include thirst, dry skin, rapid heartbeat, low blood pressure and weakness<sup>1</sup>. The most common cause of dehydration and water loss for inactive people is inadequate fluid intake. As bodily fluids are expelled through urine, sweat and respiration vapour, it is imperative to be constantly replacing these with water based beverages<sup>2</sup>.

### Dehydration and Dysphagia

For dysphagic patients, swallowing difficulties can often result in dehydration and malnutrition. On suffering dysphagia, patients find difficulty in consuming enough food and drink to maintain healthy body weight and fluid intake. In advanced cases, malnutrition can eventuate into weakening of the immune system and susceptibility to illness<sup>3</sup>. To prevent this, the Dietitian's Association of Australia recommends that the aged and sick consume sufficient fluids to meet energy expenditure, body functional needs and environmental conditions<sup>4</sup>. Approximately 500ml of water is required daily to excrete and dispose of wastes and toxins from metabolic processes, which can build up and deteriorate the kidneys and bladder<sup>1</sup>. In short, fluid needs are best met by water but milk and juices can account for part of the day's recommended intake, furthermore these liquids contain valuable nutrients for patients<sup>1</sup>.

Flavour Creations thickened beverages contain between 84 and 99% moisture and a variety of dissolved electrolytes for optimal re-hydration.

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<sup>1</sup> Whitney, Cataldo, Rolfes (2002), *Understanding normal and clinical nutrition*, Wadsworth, CA, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Wahlqvist, ML (1997), *Australasia, Asia and the Pacific: Food & Nutrition*. Allen & Unwin, NSW, Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Eisenberg JM, Kamerow DM (1999), *Diagnosis and Treatment of Swallowing Disorders (Dysphagia) in Acute-Care Stroke Patients*, The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Available at: [URL:http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat1.part.88879](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/bv.fcgi?rid=hstat1.part.88879).

<sup>4</sup> Dietitians Association of Australia, (2006) *Senior Nutrition*. Available at [URL:http://www.daa.asn.au/index.asp?pageID=2145834497](http://www.daa.asn.au/index.asp?pageID=2145834497).