

The Importance of Staying Hydrated

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A healthy person needs 30 to 50 ounces of fluid per day.

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Drinking fluids is crucial to staying healthy and maintaining the function of every system in your body, including your heart, brain, and muscles. Fluids carry nutrients to your cells, flush bacteria from your bladder, and prevent constipation.

Older adults often don't get enough fluids and risk becoming dehydrated, especially during summer when it's hotter and people perspire more. "Older people don't sense thirst as much as they did when they were younger. And that could be a problem if they're on a medication that may cause fluid loss, such as a diuretic," says Dr. Julian Seifter, a kidney specialist and associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. Warning signs of dehydration include weakness, low blood pressure, dizziness, confusion, or urine that's dark in color.

To ward off dehydration, Dr. Seifter says that healthy people should get 30 to 50 ounces of water per day (about 1 to 1.5 liters), but not all at once. "The kidneys lose some ability to eliminate water as we age. It's important to stay hydrated gradually, throughout the day," he says. He recommends drinking water or juices and eating water-rich foods such as salads, fruit, and applesauce. "An easy way to stay hydrated gradually is by getting fluids at meals, with medicine, and socially," says Dr. Seifter.

It's possible to take in too much water if you have certain health conditions, such as thyroid disease or kidney, liver, or heart problems, or if you're taking medications that make you retain water, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), opiate pain medications, and some antidepressants. Dr. Seifter says for that reason, you should check with your doctor to be sure you're getting the right amount.

Information Source:

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-importance-of-staying-hydrated>

Recipe Source:

<https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/recipe/aguas-frescas-watermelon-and-lime/>

Aguas Frescas Watermelon and Lime

Did you know that watermelon is made of 96% water and a great way to hydrate on these hot summer days?

Ingredients

- ◇ 5 cups [seedless watermelon](#) cubed
- ◇ 3 cups [water](#) divided
- ◇ 5-6 [mint leaves](#)
- ◇ 1 [lime](#) thinly sliced in rings, for garnish
- ◇ 1 cup [ice](#)

Instructions

1. Combine watermelon, 1 cup of water, and mint leaves into a blender until liquefied.
2. Pour the watermelon mixture into a 2 quart pitcher, add 2 cups of water and ice, stir together.
3. Garnish the drink with thinly sliced lime rings and enjoy.
4. Serve or store in refrigerator up to 2 days.

*Tip: Use a strainer when pouring the liquefied watermelon into the 2 quart pitcher for a thinner consistency.



Three tips to pick out a sweet watermelon

A good watermelon is a healthy summer snack staple, so it is important to know how to pick one, regardless if you are at the grocery store or the local farmers market.

When it comes time to pick the perfect melon, people often make their selection based on three characteristics: presence of seeds or lack thereof, size and ripeness.

Sweetness is off the charts this summer

Typically, a producer measures the sweetness of a watermelon by their Brix count, a way to measure sweetness. On this scale, measurements of 10 are standard and measurements of 11 are considered very sweet.

According to Juan Anciso, Ph.D., a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service vegetable specialist in Weslaco and professor with the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, this year's Brix count measures watermelon sweetness, especially those from the Rio Grande Valley, are off the charts in sweetness with measurements between 11 and 13.

However, just because this year's crop of watermelons is a higher quality, it does not mean the melon you pick will be the best of the bunch. The following three tips will teach you how to pick the best watermelon.

Determining ripeness requires knowledge



Tip 1: Find the yellow belly, or the field spot

Other than cutting open a watermelon to see the inside, the field spot is perhaps the best indicator of the ripeness. This spot on a melon shows where it was laying on the ground while attached to the vine.

If the watermelon is ripe, the field spot should be a large, yellow patch on one side of the melon. If it is ripe, the color should be a creamy, almost butter-like yellow. The bigger the yellow belly and the creamier the color means the more time the melon spent ripening on the vine. However, if the spot is smaller or looks more white than yellow, then the melon may not be as ripe.

Tip 2: Tap the underbelly and listen for a deep sound

Another way to find a ripe watermelon is to lightly knock the outside with your knuckles. A ripe melon will have a deeper sound, as opposed to an over-ripe one that will have a more hollow or flat sound. A duller, more hollow sound can mean the flesh is starting to go soft and spoil.

Tip 3: Look for a dull and heavy watermelon

Although it may not be the most photogenic nor the easiest to carry to your car, the best watermelons will be dull in appearance and heavier than the rest. A shiny melon indicates the insides are under ripe.

Also, the best melon of the bunch will most likely be heavier than the rest. On average, a watermelon is 92% water, which makes them so juicy. A heavier melon likely holds more water, which will make it juicier.

2020 is the year of the watermelon

This year's off-the-charts watermelon quality and sweetness may be the best news you will hear all day. Because watermelon season usually peaks during the summer months, do not miss out on this classic hydrating snack.

Source: <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/06/24/three-tips-to-pick-out-a-sweet-watermelon/>

How to Grill Safely

Food poisoning peaks in the summer months when warmer temperatures cause foodborne germs to flourish. **Follow these steps for a safe and enjoyable grilling season.**

Separate

When shopping, pick up meat, poultry, and seafood last, right before checkout. Separate them from other food in your shopping cart and grocery bags. To guard against cross-contamination, put packages of raw meat and poultry into individual plastic bags.

Chill

Keep meat, poultry, and seafood refrigerated until ready to grill. When transporting, keep below 40°F in an insulated cooler.

Clean

Wash your hands with soap before and after handling raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Wash work surfaces, utensils, and the grill before and after cooking.

Check your grill and tools

Use a moist cloth or paper towel to clean the grill surface before cooking. If you use a wire bristle brush, thoroughly inspect the grill's surface before cooking. Wire bristles from grill cleaning brushes may dislodge and stick into food on the grill.

Don't cross-contaminate

Throw out marinades and sauces that have touched raw meat juices, which can spread germs to cooked foods. Use clean utensils and a clean plate to remove cooked meat from the grill.

Cook

Use a food thermometer to ensure meat is cooked hot enough to kill harmful germs. When smoking, keep temperatures inside the smoker at 225°F to 300°F to keep meat a safe temperature while it cooks.

- 145°F – whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb, and veal (stand-time of 3 minutes at this temperature)
- 145°F – fish
- 160°F – hamburgers and other ground beef
- 165°F – all poultry and pre-cooked meats, like hot dogs

After Grilling: 140°F or warmer – until it's served

Refrigerate

Divide leftovers into small portions and place in covered, shallow containers. Put in freezer or fridge within two hours of cooking (one hour if above 90°F outside).



Watermelon Cucumber Balsamic Salad

Ingredients:

4 cups watermelon cubed
2 cups cucumber cubed
1/2 cup red onion sliced
1/4 cup basil chopped
2 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
2 ounces fat-free feta cheese crumbled

Directions:

1. Mix together watermelon, cucumber, red onion and basil.
2. Mix together olive oil and balsamic vinegar then pour over the watermelon mixture.
3. Top with feta cheese and enjoy.

Nutrition Facts

Serves: 6

1 Serving contains:
110 Calories Per Serving
4.5 Grams of Total Fat
(.5 g of Saturated Fat)
0 mg of Cholesterol
4g of Protein



Source: <https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu/>



County News

FRED—Families Reading Every Day

The purpose of FRED is to promote literacy development and strengthen family relationships by encouraging families to participate in a 4-week program where they focus on reading together as a family for at least 15 minutes a day for the first two weeks and 30 minutes a day for the second 2 weeks. There is a new online version that I am promoting... If you want you can develop your own timeline. Go online and register to “check it out” at <https://fch.tamu.edu/fred>

Please “Like” my new FCH Facebook page @LampasasCountyFCH

Stay safe & for the latest Disaster Education and Coronavirus information check out AgriLife’s Disaster Education Network at <https://texashelp.tamu.edu>

- Karen

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