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**A Case For Old-Fashioned Natural Remedies**

Old-fashioned remedies have their (literal) roots in herbal and natural medicines. Plants are the original medicine where all our modern day pharmaceuticals come from! They are also free of all the synthetic and potentially harmful chemicals people have put into medicine today.

Hundreds of years ago, before there were huge corporate drug companies; there were apothecaries. These were essentially pharmacies full of natural medicine, run by experienced herbalists of the time. These people worked hard to figure out what plants to use to help the people that came to them. They worked on medical advice, medicinal trials, mixtures, and some even grew their own plants to be sure they could offer quality medicine to their “patients.” Another thing apothecary proprietors would do is sell their natural remedies to the practicing physicians at the time as well. Apothecary owners were very well-versed in the ways all different kinds of plants work, and often devoted their entire lives to these studies. You could definitely say they were early versions of the fancy scientists we have today!

Then, with modern civilization came GREAT breakthroughs in medicine. We found penicillin, developed chemotherapy, and even discovered ways to survive deadly diseases through vaccines! However, with these fantastic developments also came a huge dependency on pharmaceutical drugs… With this came all the issues we have today with price-gouging, severe side effects, and blind trust in whatever these drug companies say. This is why natural remedies are making such a huge comeback in the western world… People are starting to realize that herbal medicines and old-fashioned remedies actually still have a LOT of merit.

Most pharmaceuticals seem to work very well, but they actually function more like band-aids. They work fast, yet they effects are only temporary symptom control… Take cold medicine, for example. Your most common over-the-counter medicine simply masks the symptoms. To get real healing and relief, you need to get something with an expectorant. Those symptom hiders are STILL on the shelves, though; pulling in money into useless pockets every day.

Meanwhile, herbal remedies (when prepared properly) do what they say they will do. Natural medicine works more like a cast—restorative and healing over time. They also come in endless forms so you can find the best kind for your needs, no matter what. Essential oils, teas, pills, raw, gummies, dried, etc. are all examples of mediums that herbal medicines can be found in. Natural remedies are also much more affordable and accessible, with fewer side effects than prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

Here’s a quick and TRUE story from someone I know. This friend of mine was suffering from chronic urinary tract infections. By the fourth round of meds, she had begun to develop yeast infections on top of the UTIs. This was brought on by the UTI meds—a fact her doctor failed to tell her until it was too late. This was very frustrating since she had worked hard to do everything right as far as her health in that area. So she decided to do her own research and see if there was a better way. She discovered that cranberries were FABULOUS at taking care of this issue. She got organic, sugar-free cranberry juice; cranberry gummies; and cranberry pills. She also used organic honey to sweeten the juice and take advantage of the antibacterial properties. In a week, she was able to throw away her prescription, and has NEVER had another urinary tract infection since. It has been about five years, and she only takes one supplement a week as she remembers—nothing super regimented or extreme!

More things that can be healed through natural remedies include:

* Anxiety
* Arthritis
* Depression
* Digestive Issues
* Heart/Circulation Problems
* Hormone Levels
* Inflammation
* Insomnia
* Oral Care
* Pain
* Skin Conditions
* …and so much more!

Get in touch with a licensed naturopathic doctor today, and find out how you can take advantage of the amazing benefits from old-fashioned, natural remedies!

**Chicken Soup Makes Almost Everything Better**

Everyone has been sick at one time of their life or another. We all have memories of that one bad cold we had once, and one of the things that helped make us feel better—Chicken soup. Maybe it was from a can, or maybe it was an old recipe passed down through your family… Whichever it was, it helped sooo much! Keep reading to find out how.

Chicken soup is one of the most common home remedies. It has tons of benefits, and really does help with colds and flus! Several studies have shown that chicken soup has the ability to reduce symptoms as well as help the body recover from these types of sicknesses. Let’s break down how:

Broth

It is very important to stay hydrated when you are sick; and a warm, flavorful broth is the perfect way to do that. Broth is just as important as the rest of the soup, and can also be a great vehicle for extra spices with their own added benefits.

Chicken

Chicken is full of protein and B vitamins. Protein is a great fuel for the body, and also helps you feel full longer; while B vitamins boost the immune system, as well as cell and brain function. This will help you feel less foggy and more alert… Not right away, though! First, you will need to have a nap induced by the tryptophan chicken also has. Rest is another vital part of healing properly from sickness.

Noodles

Depending on the noodle, there are a lot of different possible vitamins and benefits. Vegetable noodles add extra vitamins; while regular or egg noodles give you a boost of carbs and help you feel satisfied as you eat. Plus, they are just plain fun to eat!

Vegetables

Veggies provide the necessary vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants your body needs to recover more quickly from colds and flus. Be sure to use a good variety of vegetable to take advantage of as many benefits as possible. Think rainbow, eat the rainbow—and not the skittle kind! ;)

Benefits

All of these ingredients work together to create an incredible powerhouse of soothing and healing abilities. Studies prove that chicken soup helps with all of the following:

* Thins Mucus. The combination of steam and nutrients work together to thin and drain mucus more effectively. This means it is much easier to expel this mucus through coughing and nose blowing—which can be a huge relief.
* Boosts Immunity. With all the nutrients all mixed together, chicken soup is a true recipe for immune function success. Not only does it help you heal, but it helps your body recover as well; preventing lingering coughs or other symptoms from sticking around!
* Reduces Inflammation It has been proven that chicken soup works to slow down certain white blood cells that contribute to inflammatory symptoms in the sinuses. This greatly relieves that inflammation as well as any built-up congestion.

While chicken soup does not magically make colds disappear, it DOES make the experience more bearable. So next time you feel a flu or a cold coming on, whip up a pot and enjoy!

**Herbs You Can Grow At Home That Make Great Natural Remedies**

Having an herb garden can be useful for a lot more than adding fresh herbs to your favorite recipes. Herb gardens are actually chock full of amazing natural home remedies! Below are just a few really easy-to-grow herbs you can grow at home, as well as what natural remedies you can use them for.

Basil

This green, leafy herb is full of vitamins and antioxidants that make it quite a fantastic tool for natural medicine:

* Chewing the leaves helps with stomach pains.
* Drinking basil tea relieves coughing fits.
* A facial steam with basil and water soothes headaches.
* Basil paste takes the pain and toxins out of bug bites and stings.
* Essential oil of basil works to fix ear infections and aches.

Lavender

These lovely, purple flowers are more than just beautiful! They can be used for many different things:

* Use lavender tea as a hair rinse to clear up dandruff.
* Add the dried flowers to oatmeal for an anti-inflammatory facial scrub.
* Apply lavender essential oil to burns to help soothe and heal them.
* Spray a mixture of water and lavender oil anywhere you want to keep bugs away.

Dill

Adding this bright green herb to recipes strengthens your bones, and also improves your cellular function. However, that’s not all! There are more things you can use dill for:

* Dill essential oil can help relieve cramps from menstruation, indigestion, gas, and even in the muscles.
* Small doses of dill tea can help soothe colicky babies.
* Eating the herb helps with milk production in nursing mothers.

Fennel

The seeds, in particular, have the most benefits to offer you and your family. Fennel is purifying, helps with digestion, and can even improve eyesight in some people! The most common home remedies of fennel include:

* Soak fennel seeds in water overnight, then drink to help with heat stroke.
* Eat a small handful after meals to aid digestion.
* Fennel powder mixed with grape juice and cumin powder lowers fevers when you drink it.

Oregano

This velvety herb is anti everything! Anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal, anti-viral, and antibacterial. It also had lots of antioxidants to boost all these benefits as well. Here’s what you can use oregano for at home:

* Drink oregano tea to help with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS.)
* Oregano essential oil mixed with salt into a paste is an effective cure for Athlete’s Foot.
* Add the essential oil to olive oil as a rub for muscle and joint pain relief.

These are just a few herbs with a few go their home remedies to get you started. Nearly every herb you can grow is full of benefits and potential natural medicinal properties you can take advantage of! Use this as the first step to your future of making your very own natural remedies. Happy herb gardening!

**Drying and Preserving Medicinal Herbs and Plants**

Being able to properly harvest and preserve your herbs after planting them is a very important part of creating your own herbal pharmacy. Below are all the steps you can take to easily preserve your medicinal herbs.

- Step 1 - Harvesting

Flowers

For flowering herbs like calendula, rose and lavender; harvest just before the flowers open. You should do your harvesting on a dry day in the morning just after the dew has evaporated. Harvest flowering herbs with stems, to make drying easier. You can separate them once they have sufficiently dried.

Leaves

For leafy herbs like basil and oregano; harvest before they begin to flower. Do this harvesting on a dry morning as well. When you harvest, cut each stem just above where it meets the main stalk.

Fruits

For fruiting plants like elderberries, you would definitely want to harvest them when they are ripe. This will depend on the type of fruit it is, so be sure you keep your eyes open if you have multiple fruiting plants you want to use. Harvest simply by picking the fruits off.

Roots

For roots like ginger, marshmallow, and turmeric; harvest at the end of their growth cycle. This will also vary by plant, so make sure you know what’s what when your plants have begun to go dormant. When you’re ready to harvest, you just dig up the root and set it aside for preservation!

Seeds

For seeds like fennel and flax, wait for the seeds to fully mature before harvesting. Make sure they are still on the plant when harvested, so you can take advantage of them while they are still intact and the most potent.

- Step 2 - Preservation

Flowers

Small flowers can be dried whole, while larger flowers should have the petals carefully separated for best drying results. Lay out your petals and flowers on clean tea towels or paper towels in a room with good circulation and low sunlight. It is important that they be laid out in one layer without any overlap to avoid making a big compost pile. Turn and check on them throughout the day, to make sure they are drying properly.

Leaves

Like flowers, some leafy herbs can be dried whole; while others do better with their leaves removed and laid out. For leaves alone, you use the same technique as you would with the flowers above. For whole stalks, you can gently tie them together by the stems in little bundles. Then, you hang these bundles upside-down until the herbs dry. You will want to keep your hanging herbs in a similar, if not the same place as your laid out herbs—High circulation, and indirect sunlight.

Fruits

Fruits can be most easily preserved by drying or freezing. When freezing or drying fruits, it is best to remove the skins and seeds from larger kinds, as well as chop them into chunks or slices. However, for smaller fruits like berries, you can simply wash and freeze/dry as they are. Just make sure you choose fruits that are ripe and not bruised or damaged in any way, so that they will last as long as possible and retain their nutrients. To dry fruits, you can use your oven or a dehydrator to dry them out. For dehydrators, you would simply follow the instructions that came with it. If you want to use your oven, however, there is an easy way to do it… Preheat your oven to the lowest temp it has—this should be under two hundred degrees Fahrenheit. Then lay your fruit out in one layer on a nonstick, oven-safe tray. Place in the oven and leave it alone until your fruit is completely dried out.

Roots

The best way to preserve roots is to freeze them and grate off what you want as needed. However, it is important that they be frozen in a vacuum sealed bag or container. This maintains their freshness longer, and keeps them from developing freezer burn over time.

Seeds

As long as bugs and moisture are completely kept away from seeds, they are the easiest to store. You can simply air dry your seeds of any moisture the same way you would flowers and leaves; then place them in airtight containers. Keep seeds in a cool, dry place for most long-lasting results.

Step 3 - Storage

This is the simplest part of the whole process! Whatever you freeze can stay frozen, and anything you dried out simply needs to be kept in airtight containers in cool, dry places. Check on your stores often to make sure mold or pests have not taken hold, and enjoy creating your very own personal preservation paradise!

**Natural Remedies Have A Place In Today’s Health Care**

When it comes to your health, it is important to know what your choices are when you are deciding what you want to use for any potential issues. While modern medicine IS full of wonderful breakthroughs, it does not mean we should forget where all this progress originated. All of today’s mainstream medicine would not be possible without the amazing plants the world used to be covered in.

There are two ways people who use natural medicine practice it:

* Complementary - Using natural medicine AND modern medicine together at the same time.
* Alternative - Using natural medicine INSTEAD of mainstream medicine.

For either of these styles to work, you must speak with a health professional in the field or fields you are interested in. It is also important to note that if you use complementary medicine, you need to inform BOTH doctors about the other. Drugs and herbs can interact in bad ways, and both your doctors need to be able to make informed decisions about what is best for you.

Another great reason to integrate natural medicine into your health care is that it deals with much more than just symptoms and diagnoses. Alternative medicine practitioners strive to not only heal your body—but your mind and spirit as well. Natural medicine sees patients as much bigger pictures than mainstream medicine. This is why complementary medicine can be so beneficial… You are able to take advantage of the best of both worlds. You have the benefits of modern science coupled with the benefits of getting help for your whole self as a person.

Sometimes, it can be more beneficial to go with completely alternative medicine for certain issues. Instead of going through a whole bottle of cold medicine that tastes terrible and only masks symptoms, you can use elderberry syrup to actually shorten a cold by up to four days! Acupuncture is another great example of a possible alternative medicine… Rather than popping endless bottles of liver-damaging pills for chronic pain, try out a few sessions of acupuncture that can FIX the problem.

There are TONS of options when it comes to natural medical care. Below are some of the most common:

* Ayurveda
* Creative outlet therapy like art, music, dance, etc.
* Herbal remedies
* Massage
* Meditation
* Reiki
* Supplements
* Yoga/Tai chi
* …and many more!

Everyone’s feelings and bodies are different, so use common sense and consult with professionals before making any changes on your own. A practicing medical professional in either field will definitely be more helpful and safer than a Google search. Remember that self diagnosis and medicating can be very dangerous and potentially fatal, so always confirm things with your doctor(s) before moving forward with any treatment plan.

**The Foods You Eat Directly Affect Your Health**

Food is the fuel our bodies use to function. It makes sense then, that eating bad fuel leads to poor function; and eating good fuel leads to peak function. Just like a car, whatever you put in can come out in bad ways… Your radiator can blow, your engine can stall, or the whole thing just plain won’t start up! The biggest and most important difference, however, is that you can always replace cars and car parts. You can’t get a new body. So what’s the difference between good and bad fuel? Does this mean you can never have ice cream or cheeseburgers again? Of course not! Just like most things, the key to feeding your body properly is balance and moderation. For example, instead of ALWAYS eating greasy drive-thru food, cut back to once a week or every other week.

Why should you worry about what you eat anyway, though? You probably feel “fine.” However, too much junk food can lead to lots of underlying or even seemingly innocuous issues. Everything from clogged arteries to acne can sometimes be attributed to the food we eat! Below is how the most common junk foods impact your health:

Sugar

Candy, soda, energy drinks, pastries, and more are all packed with sugar. This is not the same sugar found naturally in fruits, though. This is added and processed sugar. It may all taste really good, but too much can cause a lot of problems:

* Acne
* Ages you by damaging collagen and elastin
* Diabetes (type 2)
* Fatty liver disease
* Heart disease
* Increases cancer risk
* Increases depression risk
* Inflammation
* Obesity

So what can you do to avoid this? Reading labels is very important. Sugar can be found in unexpected places, so always keep your eyes open. Making things from scratch with sugar alternatives like applesauce and honey can also help cut back on the processed sugars. Replace candy cravings with organic, dried fruits that have no sugar added.

Fried/Greasy Foods

Fried chicken, greasy burgers, fast food, pizza, chips, and bacon are all examples of some fried or greasy foods. These foods can taste awesome, but eating too much of them can be so not awesome for your body. Here are a few issues that can arise from eating lots of greasy and fried foods:

* Atherosclerosis (fat-clogged arteries)
* Contributes to irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
* High cholesterol
* Hypertension (high blood pressure)
* Impaired brain/memory function
* Nutrient deficiencies
* Obesity
* Stroke
* Throws your gut’s ecosystem of bacteria out of balance

None of that sounds like a good time, so definitely make an effort to cut back on these types of foods wherever and whenever you can. Try air frying, baking, and using healthier oils like avocado and olive when you do want to do a little frying. If you just can’t totally cut out things like bacon and pizza, use napkins to drain and dab off the excess grease. Little things like that can add up, and keep you healthier!

Highly Processed/Genetically Modified Foods

Spray cheese, non-organic produce and meats, refined grains and flours, cheap frozen meals, and foods packed with preservatives should be avoided as much as possible. Highly, or “ultra” processed foods contain ingredients that you wouldn’t normally find in your kitchen… Generally with names that can be difficult to pronounce. These kinds of foods are very unhealthy, and sometimes contain chemicals and hormones banned in other countries for their dangerous side effects! Some of these side effects include:

* Anxiety
* Autoimmune disease development
* Can cause cancer
* Contributes to depression
* Depression
* Fluctuating appetite
* Heart disease
* High blood pressure
* High cholesterol
* Imbalanced hormones
* Inflammation
* Insulin resistance
* Memory problems
* Metabolic syndrome
* Obesity
* Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

Unfortunately, ultra processed foods are extremely common and convenient. However, there are LOTS of ways to avoid them. Free range and grass-fed meats, organic and unbleached flours and grains, made-from-scratch treats, and organic dairy products are great places to start. Always read labels! A good rule of thumb is the fewer ingredients, the better. Also watch out for ingredients that have several syllables, or would not be found on a typical pantry shelf.

As you can see, there is quite a bit to keep in mind when it comes to watching out for your health and what you eat. However, it is possible to substitute almost anything with healthy and safe ingredients or cooking styles.

**Three Types Of Foods To Eat Daily For Better Health**

Keeping your body fueled with healthy foods is one of the best ways to improve your health. Without proper fuel to help your body systems function, you increase your risk of many diseases and complications. There are three main types of foods you should include in your diet every day to maintain good health and eating habits. I call them The Three P’s!

Protein

Protein can be found in every single cell of the body. It is vital to keep healthy proteins in your diet. It helps with cellular growth and repair, boosts the immune system, builds strong muscles, speeds up metabolism, can lower the risk of diabetes, regulates hormones, keeps you full longer, and helps you recover more quickly from injuries and exertion. Some of the best sources of protein are:

* Chicken
* Cottage cheese
* Eggs
* Fish
* Lean cuts of beef
* Milk
* Protein powder supplements
* Shrimp
* Turkey

Pre/Probiotics

PRObiotics help encourage overall bacterial growth in the gut—keeping the ecosystem diverse and flourishing. In turn, PREbiotics encourage the growth of good bacteria only. This helps prevent bad bacteria from taking over and creating infections and other issues throughout the body. Probiotics and prebiotics aid digestion, boost the immune system, improve mood, and lower blood pressure. Great sources of these include:

* Cheddar
* Fermented foods and drinks
* Feta
* Gouda
* Honey
* Kefir
* Maple syrup
* Parmesan cheese
* Red wine
* Sour cream
* Sourdough bread
* Supplements
* Swiss cheese
* Yogurt

Plants

Plants consist of a vast number of foods including nuts, legumes, fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, herbs, mushrooms, and spices. If it grows, it’s a plant! The benefits of incorporating more plant-based foods into your diet are nearly endless, but here are a few:

* Aids digestion
* Can help with weight loss
* Helps prevent strokes and heart disease
* High fiber
* Improves brain function
* Lowers blood pressure
* Minimizes cancer risks
* Prevents vitamin deficiencies
* Provides necessary minerals
* Reduces cholesterol
* Some plants like beans and nuts also provide protein

Eating these kinds of foods each day can help keep you healthy and your body functioning at peak efficiency. Make an effort to have a variety of plants, proteins, prebiotics, and probiotics in your diet. Your whole body will thank you.

**Why You Should Have A Bottle Of Apple Cider Vinegar In Your Pantry**

Apple cider vinegar is a highly underrated and beneficial item to keep in your pantry. It has so many uses both for the inside and outside of your body. From digestive health, to hair care, apple cider vinegar does it all! Some uses and benefits of apple cider vinegar are:

Facial Cleanser

Apply apple cider vinegar to a cotton ball and rub around your face. Leave for five minutes, then rinse off. Apple cider vinegar is a natural antibacterial and detoxifier; so it can do wonders on oily and acne prone skin.

Breath Refresher

Combining a cup of water with two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar makes a great mouth rinse. Use several times a day to combat chronic bad breath and/or oral infections. A bonus benefit of doing this is that it will also whiten your teeth!

Detoxifying Hair Rinse

Soak your hair in apple cider vinegar for about five minutes once a week. This will remove toxins and product build-up from your hair and leave it shining, soft, and healthy!

Produce Wash

Use apple cider vinegar as a natural fruit and vegetable rinse. The antibacterial properties will work wonderfully to cleanse fresh produce of dirt and debris.

Burn Reliever

Place an apple cider vinegar soaked cloth over any kind of burn and let sit. This works to take the sting out of sunburn AND contact burns.

Natural All-Purpose Cleaner

Apple cider vinegar is a great natural alternative to harsh, chemical cleaners. It is both pet and child safe, as well as being very effective at removing odors and stains. Mix with baking soda and lemon for an extra strong natural scrub.

Weed Killer

Just pour a small amount of apple cider vinegar over any unwanted weeds in your garden, and they will disappear! Just be sure to only pour it over the plants you don’t want around.

Arthritis Relief

Drink two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar in eight ounces of water every day for effective arthritis pain relief. Apple cider vinegar helps by breaking down the tiny, acidic crystals that build up around the joints of those with arthritis.

Natural Energy Booster

One Tablespoon of apple cider vinegar mixed with a Tablespoon of honey, juice of half a lemon, and a pinch of ginger in eight ounces of water will have you feeling energized in no time. The best part of this is that it is completely natural, and doesn’t have all the caffeine and chemicals a prepackaged energy drink has.

Decongestant

Boil one part water to one part apple cider vinegar. Then, breathe in the steam to help clear your sinuses. This will relieve pressure, AND help with any possible cold you may be fighting.

As you can see, there are TONS of uses for apple cider vinegar. The ten you read above are just the tip of the iceberg! So go ahead and grab a bottle and keep it in your pantry asap!

**Consume Yogurt, Kefir, And Kombucha For Gut Health**

Gut health is a very important part of your overall health. The entire digestive tract is lined with an amazing ecosystem of trillions of bacteria, called a microbiome. When properly balanced, these bacteria help your body in a multitude of ways. From hormone balancing, to sleep regulation, to absorption of nutrients, and more; the gut microbiome contributes to it all! It has even been found that the gut contributes to eighty percent of your body’s immune system. However, the key to these bacteria functioning well, and doing the best they can for your whole body, is BALANCE. Eating lots of junk can kill off the good bacteria and allow the bad ones to take over. An overabundance of bad bacteria in the gut contributes to all kinds of digestive, emotional, and nutrient deficiency issues. So what can you eat to see the ecosystem inside of you balanced? There are three GREAT foods that encourage good growth in the microbiome. They are: yogurt, kefir, and kombucha. Below are the details for each!

Yogurt

Organic Greek yogurt in particular has the most health benefits of all the yogurts. This is because Greek yogurt is made with the extra step of straining out whey. This process cuts out almost half the normal amount of sugar and sodium, while nearly doubling the protein content! In addition to these benefits, Greek yogurt is full of fabulous probiotics and prebiotics that encourage healthy microbiome growth! Two specific cultures called, “Lactobacillus acidophilus” and “Lactobacillus casei” work to exclusively increase good bacteria. A bonus benefit of Greek yogurt is that is contains very little lactose, making it usually safe for lactose intolerant people to eat.

Kefir

Kefir is a fermented milk drink, and can be made with any type of cow, goat, or sheep milk. (However, goat milk is the best option overall, since it is lactose-free and also does not cause inflammation like cow’s milk does.) It gets fermented by adding grains of kefir to the chosen milk, and letting it all ferment for a whole twenty-four hours. This process creates an amazing collection of over thirty types of cultures that work as probiotics. Kefir is a very powerful probiotic that can actually help revive and repopulate good bacteria that is struggling to survive. This makes it very special in the probiotic food world.

Kombucha

This is a fermented tea drink that is absolutely packed with probiotics, live cultures, and antioxidants. The fermenting process actually gives it a lightly fizzy quality, which can help people struggling to cut back on sodas. Kombucha’s probiotics and other beneficial components help greatly with keeping your gut microbiome healthy and diverse. It also helps give the immune system a huge boost! A few things to keep in mind with kombucha, however, is that you should always be careful to buy it from a trusted seller. It can be easy to ferment it in the wrong way, and actually make you sick. Stick to store bought versions if you can; or if you REALLY know what you’re doing, make it yourself.

As with all dietary changes, it is important to speak with your primary health care provider about any of your specific issues, conditions, or needs before moving forward. Once you know what is safe for you to consume, enjoy all the health benefits of those probiotic foods and drinks, and keep your gut healthy!

**Drinking Enough Water Is Important For Your Health**

Water is one of the most important things you need for your body. In an emergency situation, there are always three things you will hear that you need: food, water, and shelter. Water makes up about seventy percent of our bodies, and even mild dehydration can lead to lots of complications.

So how can you stay properly hydrated? How do you know you are drinking enough water? A great way to keep track of how much water you need is to take your weigh in pounds, and drink half of that in ounces of water. For example, if you weigh one hundred pounds, you should be drinking at least fifty ounces of water a day. You would need more if you are exerting yourself a lot throughout the day. Another way to see ice you are hydrated is the color of your urine. It seems gross, but this can actually tell you a lot of things about your health. Hydrated urine is clear, or just has a faint yellow hue. Dark yellow, brown, or bloody urine are all progressively worse signs of dehydration.

Why do you need to be hydrated, though? Is it really that important? The answer is a huge YES! Below are just a few of the ways drinking enough water is important for your health:

Helps Detox

Staying hydrated helps your bodily systems flush out chemicals, toxins, and other waste. Drinking plenty of water aids digestion, and increases the efficiency of your liver, kidneys, digestive tract, and lymphatic system. It can prevent constipation, kidney stones, urinary tract infections, indigestion, heartburn, and more.

Contributes To Oral Health

Proper hydration helps you with saliva production. This may seem like a small thing, but dry mouth can contribute to all kinds of oral health issues. Without saliva, (and the act itself of drinking water,) you cannot wash away debris and tiny food particles throughout the day between brushings. These little pieces of food begin to rot inside your mouth; creating bad breath, cavities, and even periodontal disease. Having enough saliva through hydration can help prevent all of this when combined with good oral hygiene.

Helps The Circulatory System

Dehydration slows your blood flow, and makes it difficult for your circulatory system to get the oxygen and nutrients it needs. When this happens, your heart has to work much harder to pump your thickened blood, which could potentially lead to palpitations or even a heart attack. Drinking enough water improves your blood flow, nutrient distribution, and allows for sufficient oxygenation of the blood.

Improves Brain Function

Without water, the neurons in your brain can misfire, fire slowly, or simply not fire at all. This can make it very frustrating to get through the day… You will lose your train of thought, be unable to focus, and you may also find it difficult to communicate properly. When the body is dehydrated, it begins to slowly shut down. Cognitive function decline is the most obvious example of this happening. Staying hydrated helps to keep your brain at peak performance.

Keeps Skin Clear

Since water is so important to the flushing out of toxins throughout the body, it can be easy to develop acne and other skin conditions without it. Dehydration leads to dry, cracked skin; as well as allowing toxins to settle beneath the surface of the skin so even washing your face and showering won’t help clear your skin. Believe it or not, hydration is the true key to any skin care regimen. All the masks, scrubs, and washes in the world are useless if you aren’t drinking enough water.

These are only a few of the innumerable ways drinking enough water improves your overall health. Start properly hydrating today, and see just how amazing something so simple can impact your life in tons of positive ways!