The Importance of Hydration in Addiction Recovery

*Contributor: Rachael Mattice is the Content Writer Team Lead for Sovereign Health Group*

The human body after being addicted to either drugs or alcohol for an extended period of time requires an equal amount of time to heal after those substances are taken away. The body is a magnificent machine, but it is one [that requires service](https://www.addictionhope.com/alcohol/the-importance-of-nutrition-in-recovery-from-alcoholism) and one of the easiest ways to maintain it is to keep it hydrated.

Dehydration is a condition that occurs when the loss of bodily fluids, mostly water, exceeds the amount that is being taken in via drinking or eating. A person who is in recovery from substance abuse may not feel like drinking a lot of water, but the body needs this fluid in order to heal; going without it will only make the recovery process harder.

Water Has Many Uses for the Body

Water releases toxins from the body via the urinary system, digestive system, sweating and respiration. Whether it is an alcoholic or a drug user, the body is going to be cycling out a lot of vital fluids while it is [recovering from the withdrawal](https://www.addictionhope.com/cocaine/cocaine-what-is-it-like-to-go-through-withdrawal) of not having these substances around.

The reason why the amount of fluids being expended goes up is because the body is using those fluids to move out the toxins left behind from the patient’s addiction.

Symptoms of Dehydration

When recovering from an addiction to drugs or alcohol, a person can be dehydrated and may not be aware of it. Symptoms of dehydration include:

* Increased thirst
* Dry mouth and swollen tongue
* Weakness
* Dizziness
* Heart palpitations
* Confusion
* Sluggishness/fainting
* Inability to sweat
* Decreased urine output

The recommended daily water intake in normal circumstances is approximately one gallon for a man and three quarts for a woman. Remember that included in that are soups, broths, popsicles, gelatin, fruit juices and vegetables high in fluid content such as tomatoes and watermelon.

Avoid caffeinated beverages which increase fluid loss via the kidneys. [Energy drinks are not recommended](https://www.addictionhope.com/blog/teen-substance-abuse-and-the-link-to-energy-drinks) as they often contain large amounts of caffeine and sugar, both of which increase the chances of becoming dehydrated.

How People Can Quickly Get Dehydrated

Severe bouts of vomiting and diarrhea can quickly deplete bodily fluids and may necessitate hospitalization for intravenous fluid replacement which can also replace lost electrolytes and even prevent cardiac arrest.

Substance abuse can leave the body depleted in many areas; a person may be surprised at how much better they feel just from increasing their water intake.

Tips for staying hydrated:

* Drink from a reusable bottle daily, using tap water prevents plastic bottle waste and saves money
* If water is too bland, add a lemon or lime slice for flavor
* Make sure to drink before and after exercise
* Begin and end the day with a glass of water
* Feeling hungry? Drink water, thirst is often confused with hunger. True hunger will not be satisfied by drinking water alone

Adequate hydration for those recovering from substance abuse can be incorporated as part of the [daily routine on the journey](https://www.addictionhope.com/blog/giving-back-a-key-to-addiction-recovery) back to a healthy life. Not only will it increase the chances of successfully joining the road toward recovery, but it will also keep the body healthy and working at peak efficiency.