

General :

## Rulebooks of drinking the water.

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### Abstract :

With the help of classical references here is an attempt to recollect the regulations for drinking the water and its consequences on our body. For example drinking warm water has benefits over cold water. For reducing the weight one should avoid water after food, instead, should have it before food. By making such simple amendments in the habit of drinking the water, one may get rid of unwanted health disturbances.

**Key words:** Water, Digestion, Thirst, Sweat, Constipation.

### Introductio:

Water means 'life'<sup>1</sup>, this we have been listening, learning & experiencing since childhood. But there are many queries related to drinking of water. When to have water? How much should be the daily consumption? How should it be, Warm or cold? In relation to meal when should it be taken? Likewise many questions are there in our minds. Everybody decides their own answers according to convenience. Are there any rules for water drinking? It is necessary to know the science behind drinking the water & its consequences on our body.

### Material & Methods :

As this is a review article the materials are the classic texts of Ayurveda. And the method is systematic collection of the scattered references regarding the water and with these classical references here is an attempt to evoke the regulations for drinking the water.

### Observations & Discussion :

First of all we will see when to drink the water in relation to food. Many opinions are put forward regarding this, like; one should not have water in between meals, one should consume water only after some time following food; as, water if taken in between meals, affects the digestion. Many such outlooks are famous in public. But if the water is taken in proper way, sips by sips during meals, it does not affect the digestion perhaps it enhances the process<sup>2</sup>. For the digestion of food some amount of liquid is needed. So to have water in between the food is good for incorporation of the food. The taste of the food which is leftover in mouth is cleared by the sips of water if taken in between meals. One can enjoy the taste of the remaining food with clean tongue. With these entire benefits one should definitely have water

in between a meal. According to Acharya Vagbhata drinking water before food makes the person slim. Inbetween the meal remains average built & after food becomes fat<sup>3</sup>. So to achieve the desired result & built of the body one can try these methods of water drinking in relation to food. But for a healthy person, to maintain the normal health, drinking water in between the meal is beneficial.

Next is the issue how much quantity of water should be consumed? Many say plenty of water should be taken. How much this plenty actually is? A liter or 2 or 4 or 5!!! There are some simple criteria for that. Nature of the work is one of the major factors. E.g. the need of a heavy worker of water who tends to sweat large amount of sweat during work is definitely more than a soft-ware professional who works in an air conditioner & in sitting posture. Next factor is the atmosphere in which one resides. Warm areas & warm atmospheric conditions increase the need of water consumption. Warm areas also include cooking near gas stove for 2-3 hours which causes water loss through profuse sweating. It is not observed in case if the food is cooked in an oven. Our body gives us signals regarding the natural urges like thirst. One should not ignore these signs, like dryness of mouth, tongue, throat; increased thirst, momentary deafness, loss of concentration, burning sensation during urination, decrease in the frequency of urination, hard stools, constipation etc. If not suffering from any other illness, these are the symptoms of less water intake than the need of the body. The talking professions like telephone operator, salesman, teacher, etc, need more amount of water. To decide whether water consumed is normal or not, a simple criterion is frequency of urination. Normal frequency of urination in a healthy individual is 5 to 7<sup>4</sup> times in 24 hours. Decrease in frequency denotes less water intake. It should be adjusted accordingly. It is advised to have plenty of water now days. In fact our body gets liquids in many forms, viz. tea, coffee, cold drinks, Dal, Sambar, juices, etc. although none of these can replace water to nullify the thirst. The moral is to drink the water judiciously. If excess water is consumed it leads to heaviness of body, fullness of abdomen, lack of digestion, nausea, excess salivation, etc<sup>5</sup>. While preparing the chapatti if more water is added the combination becomes very loose & if less water is added we can't roll the chapatti properly. In either cases Chapatti is not formed. We should modify the water drinking pattern according to the changes in weather, our own body constitution, food habits and nature of work. A non-vegetarian needs more water to digest the excess muscle proteins in food. Obviously the requirement increases in this case. The person should not feel any difficulty to pass the stools next day. To generalize the quantity of water to be consumed, for an apparently healthy person of 70 kg, having average workload at normal room temperature is 2-3 liter. There should be relevant amendment according to changes in the in atmospheric temperature. Except Sharad (October heat period) & Grishma (summer) Ritu even Swastha individual should drink minimum required water, citation by Acharya Vagbhata<sup>6</sup>.

How should the water be consumed? Hot or cold? Obviously, neither too hot nor too cold water should be taken<sup>7</sup>. India is the country with huge weather diversity. Here one experiences extreme cold & hot weather conditions depending on the place where he/she is living. In one place also, there is variation according to the season. For example our national capital New Delhi experiences extreme conditions of weather in summer & in winter. One should consume

the opposite quality of water to that of atmosphere<sup>8</sup>, to compensate the weather. Usually the water colder than the body temperature is heavier for digestion than that of warmer than body temperature. Especially after food one should consume warm water. It reduces the heaviness after food. Laziness does not affect the body. It helps in the digestion of food. Reverse are the effects of drinking refrigerator water. Freeze water is not suitable for drinking<sup>9</sup>. Much of the energy is used for the digestion of the cold water. One suffers frequently from cold & cough. That is why having practice of drinking warm water have benefits over the cold water drinking practice. It is beneficial for maintaining normal health. Acharya Sushruta quotes warm water as 'Sada Pathya' means always beneficial for body<sup>10</sup>. The exceptions are Sharad (October heat period in India) & Grishma (summer) Ritu. In these seasons one should have normal temperature water as there is heat in the atmosphere.

Drinking a glass of water immediately after getting up is good or not? Ingesting anything, when it is not required, is not easily accepted by the body. Indigestion is observed if food is taken before the digestion of earlier ingested food. Same way water also needs to be digested. If thirsty, it is alright to have water in the morning. But it is not good as a habit. It may lower the digestive power. Giving excess water to farms spoils the grains. Likewise excess water drinking leads to many disorders. It may lead to Kapha-Pitta Dosha vitiation leading to disorders<sup>11</sup>. Many times we don't realize the exact cause may be the excess water. Many people have this habit of drinking water in the morning for years together. Their claim is it has become habitual so it will not harm. Even though human body has tremendous capacity to adjust according to changes in the biological processes, when the threshold is attained, the capacity is lost and there is manifestation of diseases. At such circumstances one does not even think that excess water may be the cause of the particular disease. So avoid unnecessary water drinking at wrong time in excess quantity. As is the issue of morning water drinking, same is of drinking water while going to bed. One should not have a habit of having a glass of water just before going to bed. Especially if there is evidence of cold, cough & sneezing. By correcting this simple but affecting severely habit, one may get rid of unwanted health disturbances.

### Conclusion :

From the above description we can conclude that drinking sips of water during meal is beneficial for a healthy person to maintain the normal health. An apparently healthy person of normal built having average workload should drink 2-3 liters of water, at normal room temperature. There should be proper adjustment according to heat or cold in the in atmosphere depending on the signals given by our body. Drinking warm water has benefits over cold water. One should avoid unnecessary water drinking at wrong time in excess quantity. Drinking water is not wrong but the way it is drunk should be appropriate.

### (Endnotes)

1. Sharma SP, editor. Ashtangasangraha. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Varanasi: Choukhamba Sanskrit Series; 2012.p.37.