



Sensible health and wellness
concepts for employees



An Intellectual Drought



Counting is not a new trend in the wellness world. Fitness enthusiasts count steps, reps, and calories. They add Weight Watcher points, Peloton classes, and glasses of water. While most know that eight glasses of water a day are good for a healthy diet and fuel high performance workouts, many don't know how much H₂O affects our mental sharpness and acuity. Yes, those who drink enough of this beverage (but not too much; there is too much of a good thing!) reap the rewards in

their intellectual pursuits. One of the lesser-known side effects of dehydration is “brain fog” that can impede your intellectual abilities.

Your brain and water have a longstanding relationship. [Brain cells require enough water](#) to maintain optimum efficiency. Without proper hydration, the body loses more water than it takes in, leading to dehydration. In a hydrated body, brain cells pass off nutrients and toxins in quick interactions. Without enough water, your brain cells stumble along to make exchanges like someone who has had one too many cocktails. As a result, your cognitive abilities slow down. You may have trouble pulling up memories or processing facts or figures. And think of how frustrating it is to not remember something that is on the tip of your tongue!

[Research shows](#) that even minor levels of dehydration may impact your alertness and result in decreased ability to recall information. In fact, both short-term and long-term memory can be impacted because of dehydration. Other side effects may also impede concentration. For example, a *Journal of Nutrition* study showed increased complaints of headaches and exhaustion because of low hydration. These additional body aches and low energy can contribute to an environment that is inhospitable to deep thinking or concentration.



The good news is this specific combination of brain fog can be alleviated with proper hydration. Water, served hot or cold, positively affects your mental health and may increase your intellectual ability. Think about the last time you felt “cognitively spent.” Maybe you were shuffling kids around to activities on the weekend or had a morning of meetings without a scheduled “bio break.” You felt mentally drained and there is a good reason why. Next time you find yourself in this predicament, drink a glass of water and see if this improves your cognitive abilities.

This newsletter contains general health and financial wellness information and is not a substitute for your doctor's care. You should consult an appropriate health care professional for your specific needs. Some treatments mentioned in this newsletter may not be covered by your health plan. Please refer to your benefit plan documents for information about coverage.

Creamy Cauliflower Soup Makes 4 servings

This one is EASY, only 5 ingredients. In less than 20 minutes you'll have yourself a warm, delicious bowl of soup that is so light you can serve this as a first course for dinner or with a half sandwich for lunch.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp unbleached flour (gluten-free, if desired)
- 1 medium head cauliflower, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 4 cups less sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan, make a roux by melting the butter on low heat.
2. Add the flour and stir about 2 minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth, onions and cauliflower and set heat to medium.
4. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer over medium-low heat until vegetables are tender (about 20 minutes).
5. Puree with an immersion blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

Calories: 80
Fat: 3g
Saturated Fat: 1g
Protein: 4g
Carbohydrates: 11g
Sodium: 494mg
Fiber: 4g