THE TUESDAY MINUTE

THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

Your Body's Many Cries... For Water

"According to Dr. Batmanghelidj almost all disease, even cancer, can be linked to dehydration."

The simple truth is dehydration can cause disease. Which disease? Well, according to Dr. Batmanghelidj almost all disease, even cancer, can be linked to dehydration. I remember when his book "Your Body's Many Cries for Water" came out in the early 90s, everyone was talking about water. He points out biological mechanisms connecting water to almost every condition. People got excited when they read the book but as they drank the 8 -10 glasses of water he recommended many people still suffered. But some got profoundly better.

Water may not fix every problem but problems "caused" by dehydration cannot be solved without addressing that "cause" no matter what therapy is employed. Keeping this in mind, "Restoring and maintaining adequate hydration can increase the effectiveness of clinical therapies." Since Dr. Batmanghelidj spent much of his life studying water, physiology and clinical application, let's do a brief review to understand the principles of his work.

The human body is 25% solid or solute and 75% water which is the solvent. The solute refers to the enzymes, minerals, proteins, hormones, etc. Over the years medicine has attempted to manipulate the solute in the body to achieve health benefits. However if the solvent is depleted, the electromagnetic fields of the solute will not work at their capacity. Proteins and enzymes function more efficiently in solutions of lower viscosity. In other words in solutions of higher viscosity, i.e. dehydration, proteins, enzymes and hormones become less efficient. Therefore every function of the body is monitored and pegged to the flow of water!

Often, when people think thirst, coffee, tea, alcohol, soft drinks, etc. come to mind; however, these concentrated fluids can never substitute for the body's need for water. In fact these substances can actually increase dehydration because the body must further dilute them due to their concentrated composition. So the very things we

drink for dehydration actually make the situation worse from a cellular perspective.

At the cell membrane, the osmotic flow of water through the membrane can generate "hydroelectric" energy or voltage that is converted and stored in the energy pools of ATP and GTP. ATP and GTP are like vital cell battery systems storing energy particularly important in neurotransmission. So dehydration can cause a type of cellular fatigue.

The brain has absolute priority in the water rationing system of the body. "Products manufactured in the brain cells are transported on "waterways" to their destination in the nerve endings for use in the transmission of messages. There seems to exist small waterways or micro streams along the length of nerves that "float" the packaged materials along "guide lines" called microtubules.

Water also has a firmly established and essential hydrolytic role in all aspects of metabolism. Similar to the chemical powers of water that make a seed grow, these water dependent chemical processes we call hydrolysis are essential for life. "Hydro" refers to water and "lysis" means separation. Water is essential for the splitting or separation of proteins, carbohydrates, enzymes, etc.

Let's look at a possible dehydration pain link. Histamine is one of the ways the body regulates water intake and distribution in the body. As histamine and its subordinate water regulators prostaglandins, kinins, etc. become excessively active they cause pain when they come across pain sensing nerves in the body. Non-infectious, recurring, chronic pain should always be translated as a "thirst" signal first!

How about stomach pain? Dr. Batmanghelidj has treated more than 3,000 patients suffering from "dyspeptic pain" with nothing but water. He calls it an emergency dehydration or "thirst" signal. Dehydration and a resultant change in water content in the cells, to water content outside the cells brings about tissue changes locally in the gut. As the dehydration persists, the histamine regulated water management system swings into operation, with resultant local dyspeptic pain. Of course this "thirst" signal can be suppressed with medication, which is the usual recommendation. But wouldn't it be reasonable to try water first?

Another "thirst" signal of the body is joint pain. As we know, cartilage has a high concentration of water. This "held water" allows the cartilage to provide almost friction-less joint movement. The water being the lubricant that protects the contact surfaces of the joint. As joints move and the cartilage surfaces glide over one another, some exposed cells die and are removed. New cells take their place.

In well-hydrated cartilage the rate of friction damage is minimal. In dehydrated cartilage the rate of abrasive damage is increased. The water to hydrate cartilage comes from the base through the bone marrow and the bone; however, there is competition as growing blood cells in the marrow take priority over cartilage for the available water.

Dr. Batmangelidj has similar logical mechanisms to link dehydration to angina, allergies, asthma, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, colitis, hiatus hernia, depression, obesity, even insulin regulation. Again that doesn't mean that water will cure all these conditions but it is important to realize that problems caused by dehydration cannot be solved without addressing it no matter what therapy is employed.

Perhaps water should be the number one factor that we address with every patient. I have included a summary "fact sheet" to help you discuss this important concept with your patients.

Thanks for reading this week's edition. I'll see you next Tuesday.