

April Nurses' Notes

As I write this, we are in Holy Week, remembering and celebrating the events of Jesus' last week with His disciples. Sunday is Easter and the promise of new life for all who follow Jesus.

God's world is bursting with new life as well, isn't it? I spent many hours in the sun yesterday, removing last year's debris and unwanted tree saplings from a flowerbed. Then I decided to remove a shrub that hasn't looked really good for a couple years. As I worked, I envisioned the beauty that might grow in this space in the coming weeks. I wore a sunhat and had an insulated water bottle that I refilled a couple times. However, by suppertime, I noticed that my fingers were in serious "cramp mode", making all sorts of painful contortions. So.....

Let's talk about dehydration! At any given point in time, 75% of Americans are dehydrated. Infants, toddlers, and those over 65 years old are most affected. Persons with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and emphysema are more at risk since their bodies are already in an overactive state. Also some medications may lead to a need for more water. Our bodies are 70% water. Adequate hydration is vital for our bones, muscles and skin.

And water is the gold standard for hydration. Everything else is less than! Serious athletes may benefit from sports drinks, but in general they have added sugars and chemicals that aren't helpful to non-athletes.. When it comes to hydration, the less sugar, the better. Aim for 64 ounces per day. (I find that very hard to do—hence the cramping! Ha.) Try to always drink 8 ounces of water before each meal and at bedtime. Use an insulated mug or cup during the day. Don't go more than an hour without at least a sip of water.

Years ago when I was an ICU nurse, we had frequent admissions to the unit with a diagnosis of "Dehydration and Hyponatremia". The first thing to do was start an IV and pump them full of normal saline in order to lower their racing hearts. These were serious situations, mostly avoidable by drinking more water.

Just a reminder to us all as we move into warmer weather and outdoor activities:
DRINK WATER!! Lots of it. Every day. Bye.