

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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*Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery*

## **Fluid Balance**

Drink a lot of water the doctor says, eat plenty of fruit. This can be damaging advice if not explained in detail to our patients. Yes fruit is good for you, it has fiber. It also has a lot of sugar that may aggravate the diabetic patient. Fruit also has a lot of water content. Those with too much fluid on their body may get overloaded from eating too much fruit.

People who have swollen legs will have wound healing problems. The cause of this edema may be from total body fluid overload. I see a lot of patients with this condition. It is often a misunderstanding of what their doctors have told them.

The most common cause of this excess fluid is from consuming too much fluid or fluid containing foods. Patients often say to me that their doctor told them to drink a lot of fluid. Many patients are on fluid pills because they have elevated blood pressure or some other reason that causes fluid build up. Treatment involves removing fluids.

Now let us think about this. You already have too much fluid so you are given a water pill to get it off. The extra fluid is removed but then you consume more fluids. You end up back where you started, with too much body fluid again. Remember that the pill is to reduce your body fluid level. You must end up with less. Often this means that you must always be a little thirsty.

So often I see patients on large doses of diuretic medications, water pills. They are given larger and larger doses by their doctor. The patients keep drinking more and more fluids. It is a vicious cycle. Some better communication is needed here.

When I see these water logged patients I tell them to diminish their fluid intake by 20 percent. That is all I ask. One should not make a very big change all at once. I also discuss fruits and vegetables, items with high water content. Finally I tell patients to discuss in detail diet and fluid concerns with their medical doctor or their heart doctor.

Most important is that you make no changes without discussing it with your doctors. Fluid balance is very critical for some people. Take extra time to tell your doctor exactly what you eat and drink. Not enough fluid is as bad as too much fluid. Make sure you mention that you keep a tall glass of water at the bedside at night, that you drink juices. It is not just water intake that counts.

Fluid intake includes all sources as coffee, tea, juice, fruits including melon and citrus, vegetables, cereal, milk, cheese, yogurt, soft drinks, and cocktails. Do not forget to include the fluid you ingest while taking medications. If you truly add up all the items you consume that add fluid to your body it may shock you.

Additional fluids are also retained as an indirect result of excessive salt intake. But this is another topic.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.**

**Venice Plastic Surgery, Venice Wound Center, Lakeside Medical Center**

**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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