

# VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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## **Wounds - Fluid Balance revisited**

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 or vegetables and then drinking a lot of water.

Many foods contain a lot of fluid even though they seem solid. Patients often get fluid overloaded because they do not understand this fact. 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.

It is easy to understand why patients are confused about their water balance. Let us look at some specific food samples. Asparagus is between 92 and 94 percent water. Broccoli is about the same and so are green beans and spinach. Corn only has 75 to 80 percent water content. I find it interesting that most fruits as oranges, grapes and grapefruit actually have only 80 to 90 percent water. A banana is 75 and a pear is 83 percent water. Watermelon and other melons run around 90. Lettuce is the highest I see at 96 percent water.

Most beef and chicken are in the 50 to 60 percent range while breads are typically around 35 percent water. If you toast it the moisture drops to 20 or 25.

Cheese seems moist to me yet most types are only 25 to 45 percent water. American scores a 40, but cottage cheese is around 79 percent water. Still this is well below the average water content of vegetables.

The take home message here is that food has a lot of water content. Eating a cup of fruit, one of meat and a cup of bread is like drinking 2 cups of water. Add to that a cup of milk and a cup of coffee and you just consumed a quart of fluid. And essentially all these fluids are water so that lunch you just had includes a quart of water. That is a lot for a person who already has too much fluid on your system.

Consult your doctor and discuss in detail what foods you should eat and in what amounts. It is always a good thing to consult with a dietician in these matters.

**The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.  
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**Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company**

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