Hydration: The Importance of Water

Introduction:

It is well-known that you cannot live without it, and no, I am not referring to your cellphone. It is water that is essential to life. With summer here and the temperature getting hotter every day, hydration is an important factor in staying safe in the workplace. Most people have been told that they should drink at least 64 ounces of water daily. The actual amount of fluids necessary depends on the person's health and daily activity. Hydration is crucial for many reasons, including organs and cells that need to stay hydrated to function properly. Hydration also helps with mental health, cognitive skills, and prevents fatigue. According to the Institute of Medicine, nearly 75% of Americans suffer from dehydration. Signs of dehydration include thirst, decreased urination, rapid breathing and heartbeat, irritability, confusion, headaches, and fatigue. Dehydration can affect daily living, including work production, because much time is spent at work during the day. Drinking enough water is about establishing a daily routine and being aware of water intake.

Discussion Points:

- The importance of hydration
- Signs of dehydration
- Providing workers with water throughout the day
- The benefits of drinking water at work

Discussion:

Employers have a responsibility to provide employees with accessible drinking water. Statistics show that when fresh water is easily available, employees are more likely to drink water and less likely to drink soda, tea, or coffee. Employers should also encourage workers to stay hydrated and provide training and education about the importance of hydration and the negative effects of dehydration. It is recommended that employers provide a water station with fresh or bottled water, and possibly juices, fruits, and vegetables. Workers should be encouraged to avoid sports drinks, sodas, tea, and coffee, which are all high in sugars and/or caffeine. Educating employees can be as easy as posting educational material around the workplace, including posters showing the importance of hydration. Remind workers of the benefits of drinking enough water throughout the day, and how it improves health and wellness. Hydration will decrease thirst, flush toxins from the body, prevent muscle cramps, improve concentration and mood, reduce headaches, and relieve fatigue.

If an employer promotes hydration and the employee takes the initiative to drink more water during the work day, their body can function better, their mood might stay at a higher level, the work environment could be more pleasant for everyone, and work production might improve.

As always, stay safe out there!