

BODY TEMPERATURE

By Richard Sorokin

It's amazing that all human life has a body temperature of 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. No matter the color of your skin, or where you live, it's 98.6. If you are from Europe, Asia, the Far East or anywhere else, it's still 98.6. Does this say something about our common heritage? Do we all come from the same original prehistoric tribe?

Our bodies maintain this temperature regardless of the environment or our activity. Remember, your body burns fuel to create energy and heat. We take in food and combine it with oxygen to "burn it" and give off energy to power our muscles, to move. The muscles when working create heat as a by product. This heat keeps our bodies warm but must be regulated.

In a cold environment we cover our bodies so that the body is separated from the surrounding air. The air next to the body we try to capture. We use clothing that is hairy, like wool, or fur to trap the air. The body warms this air and we are comfortable. Moving air, wind, can upset this balance and give us a chill. We can control our body temperature by regulating the type and amount of clothing we wear. In warm climates the problem is the opposite. How to cool off the body when the air is warmer than you are? We have solved that problem by sweating. When your body gets warm it sweats. There are sweat glands all over your body that give off moisture. This moisture absorbs the body heat, changes from a liquid to a gas and moves off carrying the energy it used to change from a liquid to a gas with it. How much energy is carried off.? The terms that are best are in grams. A gram is a unit of weight that is 1/28 of an ounce. Remember 16 ounces to the pound. A gram is really light. It takes only 80 calories per gram to change ice to water. But it takes 540 calories to change one gram of liquid water to a gas. Now that's a lot of energy. This is why steam is so powerful and evaporation can be very cooling. Letting air move over your wet body is a cooling process. We again control it with clothing and the amount of skin we have exposed.

To keep this system working the body must have a supply of water. This can come in many forms such as plain water, soda water, milk, coffee, tea, fruit juices etc. Most of our food such as fruits and vegetables contain lots of water. Four to six glasses a day will do it under normal situations. If you're out where it is hot and sunny more will be needed. It's best to over drink than under drink.

Our body temperature is so fixed that any change is an indication that we are not well. The first thing a doctor does when examining you is to take your body temperature.

98.6 is the magic number, drink and be well