“Laughter, The Best Medicine, comes in liquid form”

“Doc’s Spoonful of Medicine”

#2. “I never knew WATER could taste so good.”

We must not let CoVid-19 make us forget normal good health practices. A humble but particularly important ingredient for good health is water. We are lucky in Fletton to have clean fresh (tasty), tap water. One of the greatest achievements of my late father, was to provide a burr hole, for clean fresh drinking water, for a village in the African jungle.

Water makes up 71% of the Earth’s surface and 65% of the human body content. I’d say that’s enough to give the Water Party a stomping majority in any parliament on Earth.

You can last for weeks (6-8), without any food at all, as people have done through time, during famine, war and fasting. We store food energy in our liver, muscles, and fat. However, you can only survive a matter of days (3-8) with no water at all. It is necessary for daily function. Most people under-estimate how much water they need each day and mistake “fluids” such as teas, coffee, milk, fizzy drinks, fruit juices and squashes as members of The Water Party. The truth is that almost all other drinks, require water to process the constituent particles, and many have a “diuretic” action, meaning that by the end of the day you have peed out more water than was in the drink, leaving your tissues relatively dehydrated, but not always enough to trigger thirst. You need a glass of water in addition to your tea or coffee, even herbal and green teas and your wine or beer.

Even in my 40th year as doctor I am still frozen motionless by people who say they do not like water, but they drink plenty of tea and squash, some even including their pints of beer or their gin and tonic. Alcohol is dehydrating because it makes you pee out more water and it needs water to process it inside you. The major factors in a hangover are insufficient water and glucose in the brain tissues.

Over nearly three decades of general practice, I have remarked that I rarely see people with kidney stones who can honestly say that they are not “tea and cheese lovers”, which I always ask them, in my quest for “future prevention is better than curing again”. This is not in the textbooks, but you cannot argue with real life experience when you are looking for something to help people. Anyone who has passed a kidney stone will know why it is classified as one of the four most painful natural events, along with childbirth, some heart attacks and passing gallstones. Pulling out fingernails or teeth without anaesthetic do not count.

Water shortage in the body is one of the commonest causes of headache, fatigue, tiredness, dizziness, general discomfort, aching, poor vision, and bad skin. At the extreme end it can cause confusion, especially in elderly folk who do not drink much of anything, delirium, and seizures; ultimately it can cause death. Losing water in sweat, urine, breath, cough, motions, especially diarrhoea, are part of normal life, but if any of these are increased then the intake of water must also be increased. I recommend having a small cup or glass by your cold water tap in the kitchen and bathroom to remind you to top up your body water, when you get up, in each couple of hours, and after dinner, even if you have had water with your meal. Try to have a glass of water with alcoholic drinks. I prefer it with ice or as a hot one with a spoon of honey and a splash of lemon juice.

I raise my water glass to your good health, Fletton folk. Cheers!