

How to stay hydrated throughout the day



Hydration is essential for life and underpins both physical and mental wellbeing. Despite its importance, many people fail to drink enough water each day. Staying hydrated is crucial for **maintaining a healthy body and mind**. Let's explore why hydration is vital, its benefits, and practical tips for increasing your daily water intake.



Why is water important?

Water plays a fundamental role in keeping our bodies functioning properly.

- **Forms the foundation of our body:** Around 60% of the human body is water.
- **Regulates body temperature:** Through sweating and respiration.
- **Transports essential nutrients:** Water carries oxygen and nutrients via the bloodstream.
- **Lubricates joints:** Reducing friction and improving mobility.
- **Flushes out toxins:** Removing waste products through urination.
- **Aids digestion:** By forming saliva and breaking down food.
- **Cushions vital organs:** Protecting the brain, spinal cord, and other sensitive tissues.

How much water do we need?

The recommended daily fluid intake varies depending on factors such as age, activity level, and climate:



Men:

About 8 cups (2 litres) per day.



Women:

About 6 cups (1.6 litres) per day.

These totals include fluids from all sources, including water, other beverages, and food. Children typically need a bit less water, aiming for about 6 to 8 drinks per day. However, as they enter their teenage years, their hydration needs become more similar to those of adults.

What counts as a drink?

Most non-alcoholic drinks count. Water is the best choice, but tea, coffee, milk, and low-sugar drinks all work. Fizzy drinks and hot chocolates might hydrate you, but they're not the healthiest options. Save those for a treat.

Some people worry about caffeine making you pee more, but don't stress. The water in tea or coffee more than makes up for it. **Decaf options are also great** if you're concerned about sleep or caffeine sensitivity.

Did you know, about **20–30% of your daily fluid** comes from food? Water-packed fruits and veggies like cucumber, tomatoes, and melon can help you hit your target. Soups, stews, and broths are excellent in colder months too.

How do you know if you're drinking enough?

Thirst isn't always the best guide. By the time you feel thirsty, you're already running low on water. A better way to check? Look at your pee. Pale yellow means you're good to go. Dark yellow? Time to grab a glass of water.

Healthy pee -----> Drink more ----->



Other signs of dehydration include:

- Feeling tired or sluggish
- Difficulty concentrating
- Dry lips or mouth
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded

If you notice these symptoms, try upping your water intake and see how you feel. Long-term dehydration can lead to more serious issues like constipation, UTIs, and even kidney stones. Drinking enough water every day helps keep these problems away.

Hydration and exercise

When you're active, you sweat more, which means **you need to drink more**. If you don't, your energy levels will drop, and it'll feel way harder to keep moving. For everyday workouts or casual sports, water does the trick. Just keep a water bottle handy and sip when you need to.

For athletes or anyone doing intense exercise, **sports drinks can help**. They replace not just water but also the salts and electrolytes you lose through sweat. For most of us, though, plain water is enough.



Hydration myths

There are plenty of myths about hydration. Let's bust a few:



You need exactly 8 glasses a day

Everyone's needs are different. Use thirst and urine colour as your guide.



Coffee and tea don't count

They do! Even though caffeine is a mild diuretic, the water in these drinks still hydrates you.



You can't drink too much water.

While rare, overhydration can happen. It's called water intoxication and usually only occurs in extreme situations like endurance sports.

Simple tips for staying hydrated

- **Start early:** Begin your day with a glass of water. It wakes up your body and sets the tone for good hydration.
- **Add flavour:** If plain water feels boring, add a splash of squash or a slice of fruit to make it more interesting. Mint, cucumber, or lemon are great options.
- **Try teas:** Herbal and fruit teas are great, especially at night. They're a comforting way to get extra fluid without caffeine.
- **Carry a water bottle:** A reusable bottle makes it easy to sip all day long. Look for one that's easy to carry and refill.
- **Set reminders:** Use an app or alarm to nudge you to drink regularly. Some bottles even light up or beep when it's time for a drink.
- **Drink during mealtimes:** Have a glass of water before and during meals. It'll help with digestion and stop you from overeating.
- **Eat your water:** Soups, broths, ice lollies, and water-rich fruits and veggies are all good options. In the summer, watermelon, strawberries, and cucumbers are refreshing choices.



Staying hydrated keeps you **feeling and thinking your best**. It boosts your energy, helps you focus, and supports every part of your body. Make it a habit to keep a bottle nearby and drink throughout the day.

Contact **HealthHero** today for more support and advice. We're with you every step of the way.
