


Healthy eating

How much water should you drink?



The amount of water we should drink will vary from person to person depending on their individual needs and lifestyle. As a general principle both the Food Standards Agency and British Dietetic Association recommend that the average adult should drink between 1.8 and 2 litres of water per day.

When should I drink water?

The simple rule is – regularly throughout the day, if you start to feel thirsty you're already slightly dehydrated.

Top tips

- Drink a minimum of 1.2 litres of water a day
- Check your urine colour for dehydration every time you go to the toilet
- Carry a water bottle with you all day where possible
- Stop drinking 2 hours before heading for bed
- Drink water at meetings to replace coffee/tea

Please note: do not drink additional water if you have a medical condition that prevents you from doing this – always follow the advice of your GP

As you increase the amount of water you drink, keep an eye on the benefits

- Check your urine colour for signs of improved hydration – your urine will be clear on a more regular basis
- Note any changes in appearance – the condition of your skin will improve
- Note any changes in bowel regularity – your bowel habit should become more regular

What if I don't like drinking water?

You can make water more interesting by:

- Adding a slice of lemon or lime
- Using diluted fruit juice
- Drinking fruit and herb teas

Stay away from too many high-sugar fizzy drinks or lots of 100% fruit juice or smoothies as these will lead to excess energy intake and potential weight gain.

What about caffeine in tea and coffee?

Tea and coffee do contain caffeine, which is a mild diuretic, so in large or very strong amounts this could result in dehydration. However, the British Dietetic Association state that tea and instant coffee, drunk in moderation, are unlikely to have a negative effect, so these can count towards your water intake. Beware though of fresh and strong coffee (like those from coffee shops) as these will act as diuretics and increase the need for you to drink water.

Do I have to drink special water?

If you prefer bottled or filtered water that's fine. But water straight from the tap is perfectly good.

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How much water should you drink? contd.

Hydration diary

Use this diary to record your hydration over a seven-day period. Your aim is to have 6- 8 glasses each day unless you have a medical condition that prevents you from doing this.

My Water Diary	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
One glass of water							
Two glasses of water							
Three glasses of water							
Four glasses of water							
Five glasses of water							
Six glasses of water							
Seven glasses of water							
Eight glasses of water							

Signs and symptoms of dehydration

look out for the signs and symptoms of dehydration. These include:

- Drowsiness
- Headaches
- Dry skin, eyes and lips
- Lack of concentration
- Irritability

Checking your hydration levels

The simplest way to do this is to check the colour of your urine each time you visit the toilet. The chart below shows 8 different shades. The basic rule of thumb is that "healthy pee is 1 to 3; and 4 to 8 you must hydrate".



"Healthy pee is 1 to 3, 4-8 you must hydrate!"