

Keeping Hydrated During Winter



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As the weather begins to get cooler here in the Southern hemisphere, the idea of greeting the morning with a cup of hot coffee and curling up with a warming glass of red wine in the evening becomes ever more enticing. But as water makes up about 60% of our weight and is vital for our body's regulation and survival, keeping your water bottle on hand is still just as important as ever!

How much water should I drink?

The answer to this depends on things such as your build, activity level, where you live and your overall health. Generally, somewhere between 2-3 litres is optimal, keeping the following factors in mind:

- **Age, sex and body weight** – Males need more water than females, and larger people need more than slim individuals. Infants and the elderly are most prone to dehydration.
- **Physical activity** – It is important to drink more water before, after and during workouts or any activity that makes you perspire.
- **Environment** – extreme temperatures and high altitudes can all lead to dehydration and increase our need for water. Water can help us cool off in summer but can also warm us up in the winter, as it is needed to maintain temperature balance in the body.
- **Health** – When we're unwell, our needs for water are also increased, as this is what helps the body rid itself of toxins, including harmful bacteria. The same goes for those who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- **Output** – Every time you breathe, sweat, urinate or have a bowel motion, water is lost and must be replenished. If you have any vomiting or diarrhoea, your need for water is instantly made greater.



What is included?

Foods with increased water content, such as fruits and vegetables, soups/ broths and herbal teas, can account for 20% of your total water intake. The highest water-containing fruits and vegetables are watermelon, strawberries, peaches, cucumber, lettuce and zucchini. Avoid caffeine, alcohol and sugary beverages like soft drinks and energy drinks, as these have a diuretic effect on the kidneys that causes you to need to drink much more water than usual.



What are the signs of dehydration?

In the cooler weather, it's more difficult to notice when your body is losing moisture. Combined with the drier air, extra layers of clothing and less perspiration, a lack of water can easily lead to dehydration. This can increase your risk of kidney stones, urinary tract infections and constipation. Signs that you may be dehydrated include:

- Thirst
- Flushed skin
- Dark-coloured urine
- Dry or sticky mouth
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Dizziness
- Dry skin
- Rapid breathing or heart rate.

How can I stay hydrated?

Some useful tips to help maintain and replenish your fluids this winter include:

- Don't rely on thirst to tell you when you need water, as being thirsty is not an accurate predictor of your hydration levels.
- Carry a refillable water bottle with you and refill as needed. You can put a rubber band around the bottle each time you finish it to keep track of how much you're drinking.
- Add a squeeze of fresh lemon, a sprig of mint or even some chia seeds to your water to keep it interesting and remind you to drink more.
- Drink your water on its own and avoid drinking water with meals, as this can impair the digestion and absorption of valuable nutrients.
- To incorporate extra fluid at mealtimes, try to make sure your plate consists of half fruits and vegetables.
- Invest in a top-quality water filter, which purifies the water by ridding it of nasty additives, such as chlorine, fluoride and aluminium.



Staying hydrated through the winter can boost your immune system and give your body the support it needs to fight off infection. If you want to ensure your skin stays healthy and your internal organs remain in tip-top shape, keep sipping on the purest beverage that exists to us. And, allow your body to thank you for it!

Written by [Zanna Taeni](#)

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