

Your Guide to Healthy Hydration

How much do we need?

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine recommends that an adequate daily fluid intake is about **15.5 cups (125 ounces) for men and about 11.5 cups (91 ounces) for women**. Not all of our daily fluids need to be met with water alone. Water, other beverages, and the water in the foods we eat can help us meet the daily fluid recommendation. Fluid needs can be higher for those people that are:

- Highly active
- Living in a warm and/or dry climate
- Ill with fever, infection, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Overweight or obese

How much is enough?

Use the urine test to determine if you are getting enough fluids. If your urine is clear or pale yellow, you likely are getting enough fluids. If your urine is a bright or dark yellow or has a strong odor, you likely need additional fluids.

Why do we need water?

Water is essential for your body to function. Here are just some the reasons adequate hydration is so important.

- Carries nutrients and oxygen to our cells
- Gets rid of waste through perspiration, urination and bowel movements
- Flushes bacteria from our bladder
- Aids in digestion and prevents constipation
- Regulates body temperature
- Helps to maintain healthy blood pressure
- Protects body organs and tissues
- Moistens mucus membranes in our eyes, nose and mouth
- Lubricates and cushions joints



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You're pregnant. How much water do you need?

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends pregnant women consume **8-12 cups of water daily** during pregnancy. Adequate hydration during pregnancy may help prevent constipation, hemorrhoids and urinary tract and bladder infections.

You're breastfeeding. How much fluid do you need?

Breastfeeding women need about **16 cups of fluids per day**—this can come from food, beverages and drinking water. The additional fluids each day is needed to make breast milk. One easy way to help ensure you get the fluids needed is to drink a large glass of water each time you breast-feed your baby.

Is drinking water the only way to meet the daily fluid recommendations?

No. Water is the top choice for hydration, but drinking milk, coffee, tea, fruit juices, soda and diet soda can also be hydrating. Some beverages such as coffee and tea contain a high water content but can also contain caffeine, so some caution is recommended in the amount consumed each day. Drinking an 8-ounce cup of coffee or tea counts as 8 ounces of fluid, however, the more you drink, the less hydrating it is. A 12-ounce regular soda counts as 12 ounces of fluid, however, due to the high amount of added sugars, a regular soda may not be the healthiest choice to meet daily fluid needs.

Eating foods that are high in water content can also help us meet our daily fluid needs. Foods that are good to excellent sources of water include:

- Strawberries
- Watermelon
- Lettuce
- Cabbage
- Celery
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Yogurt
- Apples
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Carrots
- Blueberries
- Grapefruit
- Yellow peppers
- Zucchini
- Cucumbers
- Asparagus
- Iceberg lettuce

Eating approximately one cup of any of the fruits or vegetables listed above can contribute to as much as $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fluid.

Ensuring you are consuming enough fluids is needed to be and stay healthy. To help track your fluid consumption, keep a paper log or find a handy app for your smart phone. We recommend the following free apps: WaterMinder, Aqualert, and Water Tracker Daily. All can be found in the Apple App store or on Google Play.

Questions?

If you have more questions about recommended water and fluid needs, make an appointment your primary care provider or registered dietitian by calling **320.679.1313**.