

Are you drinking enough water?

By Estee Hong

The importance of staying hydrated

Routine daily activities and bodily functions, including walking and digestion, result in water loss through sweat and urine. To prevent dehydration, one must listen to their body and drink fluids when feeling thirsty. For people who have had a stroke and are undergoing rigorous physical therapy, you may want to be drinking more water to compensate for the greater fluid loss during exercise and to help with your recovery.

General guidelines suggest that people should try to drink eight cups, or approximately two liters, of water per day. While you don't always have to strictly meet this recommendation, there are many benefits that come with a healthy level of daily water intake. Studies have shown that greater water intake might reduce constipation and improve overall digestion efficiency (1). But how do you know if you are drinking enough water? The color of your urine is a good, basic indicator of your hydration level. For instance, if your urine is dark brown-yellow in color, you are likely not drinking enough water. But, if your urine is pale yellow in color, you are likely drinking enough water. Comparing the color of your urine to a urine color chart, [like the one from the Cleveland Clinic found here](#), may help you determine if you need more water during your day-to-day life.

Benefits of Tea

Drinking tea is one way to increase your daily fluid intake. Some popular types of tea are black tea and green tea, both of which have been found to reduce the risk of stroke and lower risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease (2,3). For patients with a high risk of cardiovascular disease, or who have a family history of stroke, tea may provide protective benefits and reduce stroke incidence. Stroke survivors may also benefit from drinking tea because a cup of tea is high in flavonoid content (4). Flavonoids are plant compounds that are well known for their antioxidant properties, which help prevent cell damage (5). Studies have shown that flavonoids are very beneficial for stroke survivors, as higher antioxidant intake has been proven to improve

rehabilitation and recovery rate [\(6\)](#). If you find plain, unsweetened tea too bland, then try sweetening the tea or infusing other flavors, such as mint or lemon, to better suit your preferences.

Tips to increase fluid intake

- *Slowly increase fluid intake.* Suddenly drinking large amounts of water can be difficult and upset your stomach. Try sipping a glass of water or a cup of tea with each meal or snack.
- *Have a variety of drinks throughout the day.* Drinking water all day might be boring, so try including juices, flavored water, or tea. If you are trying to lower your sugar intake, try unsweetened teas. As discussed earlier, drinking tea comes with additional benefits!
- *Eat foods that are naturally high in water content.* For example, watermelon, grapefruit, and strawberries are about 90% water per volume, just be careful of your sugar intake - don't go beyond two servings of fruit per day.
- *Have water readily available.* Many of us forget to drink water throughout the day. Perhaps keeping water near your bed or in plain sight will be a helpful reminder.
- *Consult your doctor or a nutritionist.* Before making any big changes to your diet, inform your doctor or seek professional input. They may provide additional guidance or advise against certain changes to your diet.

Sources

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