

# Increasing Fluid Intake

## Your guide to increasing fluid intake

Review these frequently asked questions to learn more about increased fluid intake and kidney stone prevention.



### “My doctor told me I must increase my fluid intake. What should my goal be?”

It is important to drink at least 2 liters (ideally 3 or more) of fluid a day. You need to drink even more if you exercise, live or work in a hot, dry environment, and during the summer months when you perspire more. Water is the safest and best fluid for long-term use.

### “How much fluid do I need to drink to produce my goal of 2.5 liters of urine?”

To produce 2.5 liters of urine you need at least 2.5 to 3 liters of fluid intake. This is an estimate; the amount will vary from person to person.

The amount of fluid needed to produce 2.5 liters of urine depends on other factors such as:

- **Activity level** – the more active you are, the more you perspire. You will need to drink more than someone who has a low activity level to replace your body fluid loss.
- **Amount of salt in your diet** – high salt diets promote water retention. You will need to drink more fluids to flush out the added salt from your body.
- **Living or working in a hot/dry environment** – working in a factory or living in Arizona would be examples of this. You will perspire more in these environments and you will need to drink more to replace your body fluid loss.

- **Frequent flying** – There is no humidity on planes. This puts pilots, flight attendants and frequent flyers such as business people at increased risk of dehydration.

### “How does drinking more water help my kidney stone problem?”

Increasing your fluid intake dilutes your urine and prevents stones from forming.

### “How can I increase my fluid intake if I never feel thirsty?”

By the time you notice you're thirsty you are more than likely already dehydrated. You need to get in the habit of always having fluid with you. Eating foods that are high in fluids will also help you get to your goal of increasing your fluid intake. These foods include fruits, vegetables and low salt soups.

### “Can I just drink more at night when I am at home?”

Do not drink your entire day's worth of fluids at night. Not only will you be up all night using the bathroom and not getting any sleep, but you will be dehydrated all day long. You need to drink throughout the day when you are eating and active, as well as in the evening. Increase your fluid intake gradually. Now that you will be drinking more, you must retrain your bladder to adjust to your newly set goals. It will take your body time to adjust, but in about 6 weeks your bladder will become adjusted to the fluid increase.

### “What if I drink sodas? Can I count this toward my total amount of fluid intake?”

Sodas contain phosphoric acid. Phosphoric acid can reduce the amount of citrate in your urine, which is a bad thing because citrate acts like a shield against new stone formation.

The more citrate you have in your urine, the bigger your shield is to protect you from forming new stones. This doesn't mean you may never have another soda, but you should cut back from what you are currently drinking to help reduce your risk of forming another kidney stone. If you are going to have a soda, stick to the clear ones.

**“I have Crohn’s and have frequent bouts with diarrhea. When I drink water during my flares, it makes my condition worse. What should I do?”**

Many of our patients have bowel conditions (Crohn’s, ulcerative colitis, diverticulitis, etc). Because of your malabsorption issues, you can find yourself not only nutrient deprived, but fluid deprived as well. It is very important for you to increase your fluid intake.

Try popular sports drinks. Not only will they help you to replenish your fluid loss, but you will get some needed electrolytes as well. Also, sip slowly; drinking too much at one time may aggravate your condition. Drinking fluids at room temperature may be better absorbed than those at cold temperatures.

**“My doctor told me to drink lemonade. Why?”**

Your test results may have reported that you have a low citrate level. Lemonade (lemons) has citrate in it. Higher levels of citrate act like a shield against new stone formation. Drinking lemonade will help increase your citrate levels, which leads to a stronger shield. This, along with increased fluids, will help reduce your chance of forming new stones.

**Reminders and tips to help you drink more fluids**

**Remember to drink more:**

- During the summer months (you perspire more)
- After you exercise (you perspire more)
- When humidity is low (less water in the air can increase dehydration)
- If you fly frequently (there is no humidity inside the plane)
- If you live in a hot/dry environment (Southeast, Southwest, West)
- If you work in a hot/dry environment (pilot, flight attendants, business travelers, factory workers, etc)

**Helpful tips:**

- Get a special water bottle that you can carry with you
- Add a lemon, lime, orange wedge, strawberries, grapes or any favorite fruit to your bottle or glass
- In winter, drink hot water with mint leaves or lemon and honey
- Keep a water diary of how much you are drinking per 24-hour period
- Make a goal to drink a certain number of ounces per hour and try to reach it
- Set an alarm on your computer, phone or watch to remind you when to take in more fluids
- Have a glass of water before and after each of your meals
- Have a glass of water before bed each night

Some fluid filled foods	
Apples	Lettuce head
Apricots	Onions
Bananas	Oranges
Bean sprouts	Papaya, raw
Broccoli	Peaches, raw
Cabbage, raw	Peas, raw
Carrots, raw	Pineapple, raw
Cauliflower, raw	Potatoes, boiled
Celery	Squash, boiled
Cherries, raw	Strawberries, raw
Cucumbers, raw	Tomatoes, raw
Eggplant, raw	Watercress, raw
Fruit cocktail	Watermelon
Grapes	

**Our hours of operation are**

Monday – Friday, 07:00 am – 07:00 pm CST.



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