

# Staying hydrated in the summer

Summer is here and so is the heat. Remember to drink water throughout the day. Staying hydrated is crucial for many functions in the body. Our bodies need fluids to digest food, cool down, and move nutrients and waste.

Most adults need nine to 12 cups of fluid daily; however, every person's needs depend on age, sex, body size, activity level, and health status. For example, a young adult may need more fluids if exercising intensely and in hot temperatures.



## Did you know?

Older adults and children are more likely to become dehydrated? Older adults have a diminished thirst sensation, and young children may not always be attentive to their thirst signals when they are busy playing. Watch for signs of dehydration, which include dizziness, headaches, feeling tired, or having a dry mouth, lips, and tongue.

Be mindful of your hydration levels at all times. Drink beverages and eat foods with fluid content to help you stay hydrated. Here are some refreshing tips to beat the heat:

- Add flavour – Infuse your water with fruits and herbs like lemon, cucumber, or fresh berries with mint for a cool and citrusy twist.
- Enjoy variety – Besides water, choose unsweetened drinks like lower fat milk (1%, 2%, and skim), fortified plant-based soy or almond beverage, or iced herbal teas.
- Make fruit easy-to-go – Pack up fruit kabobs by threading strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and grapes onto skewers. Serve with a yogurt dip.
- Prepare a tangy and sweet fruit salad – Combine chopped apples, oranges, and pears in a bowl. Add lime juice and spice it up with a hint of chili powder for a tangy flavour.
- Make a zesty cucumber smash salad – Smash cucumbers with a rolling pin until they form bite size pieces. Add rice vinegar, sesame oil, and a dash of soy sauce. Mix and enjoy.

For more recipe ideas, visit [Food-guide.canada.ca/recipes](https://food-guide.canada.ca/recipes) or [Cookspiration.com](https://cookspiration.com).

## Common beliefs and misconceptions about drinks

### Does adding a pinch of salt to water make it more hydrating?

A recent social media trend claimed that adding salt to water can hydrate better than plain water because it replaces electrolytes. It is true that electrolytes like sodium play an important role in maintaining fluid balance; however, adding salt (which contains sodium) to water is unnecessary for the general, healthy population. Most people get enough salt from the foods they eat. Adding extra salt to your water will not improve your hydration and for some people, it can harm their health. Drink tap or filtered water and eat a balanced diet to stay hydrated and maintain your electrolyte balance.



### Do you need sports drinks after exercising?

You may lose more water and electrolytes if you exercise longer than one hour, or intensely, in hot and humid conditions. In this scenario, a sports drink (which contains water, sugar, and electrolytes like sodium and potassium) may help replace the water and sodium you lose in sweat. However, for most active people drinking water is enough for proper hydration.

### Does coconut water hydrate better than water?

Coconut water is not more hydrating than water. Just like sports drinks, coconut water contains sodium, potassium, and sugar in various amounts depending on the brand. Aside from the additional flavour that coconut water offers, research suggests that there is little to no difference between drinking coconut water or plain water for hydration in healthy adults.

## The bottom line?

Water works! Choose water most often to stay hydrated.

To learn more about hydration and healthy drink choices, search 'drinks' at [ahs.ca/nutritionhandouts](https://ahs.ca/nutritionhandouts).

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