

HYDRATION FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

*Infused Waters, Beneficial Foods,
& Delicious Recipes to Keep You
Hydrated*

A photograph of three clear glass tumblers filled with ice water. The glasses are garnished with fresh ingredients: the leftmost glass has several slices of cucumber, the middle glass has several slices of lemon, and the rightmost glass has a mix of cucumber and lemon slices. In the foreground, there are more slices of lemon and cucumber scattered on a light-colored wooden surface. The background is a rustic, white-painted wooden wall.

MIRA DESSY, NE
THE INGREDIENT GURU

PRAISE FOR

Hydration For A Healthy Life

"Not only does Hydration for a Healthy Life provide easily understandable facts about my body's water needs, but Mira offers several delicious sounding recipes. I have already upped my water intake as a result of reading this book. If more people knew the healing properties of water, the health care system would change overnight."

-Kate Rhoad

"Another valuable resource from Mira, The Ingredient Guru! This thoughtful well-cited read will delight you with just the right amount of education all while introducing practical applications for maintaining hydration with fun recipes. Whether you're looking for a hydrating tonic for one of fabulous ideas for hydrating a group, this ebook is perfect! Mira has a knack for "easy elegance" so don't be surprised if you have an insatiable need to serve these recipes at your next garden party."

-Misty Humphrey, Certified Nutrition Educator-Crystal Practitioner

"This book literally left me wanting to quench my thirst as it beautifully demos how to love my water. Mira gave a wealth of such fun information that pleasures the taste buds into giving the body exactly what it needs to thrive."

-Tina Dowdy, Clarity and Business Coach for Women Professionals

"Most people think that hydration is a dull matter of getting in your 8 cups of water a day and that's it. Mira reveals a world in which hydration is deeply understood and experienced as a sensual pleasure. She shows how to easily calculate your personal water needs, and she shares recipes to inspire any palate. After reading her book I can't wait to try her refreshing infusions and yummy agua frescas. By sharing this ebook with my nutrition clients I can convey the idea that hydration is no longer a boring dietary chore but a deliciously healthy exploration in self-care."

-Anasuya Basil, NC, Dipl. ABT, CST, Owner/Director of My Body Wisdom

"A refreshing look into the importance of hydration with easily adaptable solutions and compelling information. Dessy captures the reader's attention with a style of writing that motivates the reader to begin and/or improve hydration in their everyday life."

-Mary Kay Masters

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*Infused Waters, Beneficial Foods,
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by Mira Dessy, NE

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INTRODUCTION

Hydration is a critical area of health that many people overlook. Our bodies are up to 60% water. Yet, the majority of Americans are walking around in a state of chronic dehydration. When we're dehydrated, it turns out there's a link to increased BMI and obesity. On the other hand, proper hydration supports weight and your skin, brain, and immune system. It can also help flush toxins out of the body and reduce headaches, fatigue, and muscle cramps. In reading this e-book, the goal is to help you improve your health by getting a handle on your hydration.

Even though we know we need to hydrate our bodies, the truth is that most of us walk around in a state of chronic dehydration. When we don't drink enough, it takes a toll on our systems. One really surprising fact? Our bodies can easily confuse the signals for thirst and hunger. This means that sometimes when you think you're hungry, you're actually thirsty. So the next time you feel a snack attack coming on, check in with your body to figure out if you're really hungry. Even if you think you are hungry, try hydrating first. You'll get more fluids into your system (always a good idea), and you may discover you weren't really hungry after all.

If you think you're hungry, you may actually be thirsty. Try hydrating before snacking.



HOW MUCH WATER DO WE NEED?

If asked, almost everyone shares that old standby, 'we all need 8 glasses of water a day to be well hydrated.' But is this really true? The simple answer is no. When you stop to think about it, there are big differences between individuals. After all, someone who weighs 150 pounds is going to have a very different hydration need than someone who weighs 195 pounds. So how do you figure out how much you need? Luckily, it's easy to calculate your needs using the hydration factor chart below.

Truthfully, this number is also just an approximation. The formula doesn't take into account if you are eating hydrating foods such as cucumber, celery, or watermelon. Nor does it factor in if you're working out or how the weather can affect how well hydrated you are. But it's a really good place to start.

Here is a quick way to figure out an approximate amount of fluid to drink using someone who weighs 150 pounds:

Your body weight (in pounds): ___150___

Divide that number in half: ___75___ (this is the number of ounces you need)

Divide that number by 8: ___9.38___ (this is how many cups you need daily)

This 150-pound person needs almost 9.5 cups of water per day, which is 1.5 cups more than the often-quoted 8-cup factoid. So you can see that this person would still be slightly dehydrated even if they were drinking 8 cups a day. Now take a moment and calculate your hydration factor:

Your body weight (in pounds): ___

Divide that number in half: ___ounces

Divide that number by 8: ___cups per day

Knowing approximately how much liquid you need is the first step. This brings us to a different issue - remembering to drink enough throughout the day. Drinking all of your daily water at once is not recommended because it can deplete your electrolytes. One solution is to take your hydration factor, divide it by four, and then set a "hydration alarm" approximately every two hours. When the alarm goes off, set your liquid in front of you with the goal to drink it before the alarm goes off again. This approach will allow you to hydrate over the course of about 8 hours.

Another strategy is to buy a water container that has a certain number of ounces in it, 20, 25, 32, whatever is most comfortable for you. Figure out how many refills it takes to reach your hydration factor by dividing your hydration ounces (half your body weight) by the number of ounces your container holds. Then make drinking that many containers your goal for the day.

Funny enough, it turns out you'll drink more water if you really like the container you're drinking from. According to Professor Charles Spence, drinking from a favorite cup was perceived to make the contents taste better, a phenomenon known as "sensation transference." So buy yourself a pretty cup or water bottle that you really love, your body will thank you.



KEEP TRACK OF YOUR WATER INTAKE

When you first start trying to drink more water, it may seem challenging. Especially if you realize you're not drinking even half of your personal hydration factor. In the beginning, it might also be hard to figure out if you have reached your hydration goal for the day. Writing down your water intake can help you keep track. Pick a record-keeping method that works for you, it can be a daily index card, a planner, a bullet journal, even an app on your phone or computer.

To figure out how your water intake compares to your hydration factor, you can start by keeping track of how much water you are actually consuming each day. It may be difficult to reach your goal all at once, so take the time to figure out how you can best increase your drinking to reach your personal hydration factor.

But wait, there's more.

While figuring out your personal hydration factor is important, that number is only part of the story. Caffeine and alcohol can dehydrate the body. Additionally, many prescriptions can dehydrate you, making it really important to read those pesky tiny print instruction sheets. If you're going to consume caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, it's best to offset their dehydrating effect by having a glass of water either before or after every other beverage. That glass should be the same number of ounces as the dehydrating beverage you are drinking. For example, if you are going to drink a 20-ounce soda, you'll also need to drink 20 ounces of water to hydrate your system, flush the caffeine from your body, and help support good health.

Side note: drinking soda or massive amounts of caffeine is not recommended.

Weather is another potential dehydrating factor. Cold weather can be especially dehydrating because it tends to be drier, and you may not realize how much water you are losing simply by breathing. Another factor to consider is exercise. Sweating during a workout removes precious hydration from your system and needs to be replaced. The general guideline is to add 4 ounces of fluid for every 15 minutes you work out and even more if you are sweating profusely. If you are doing extreme sports, you'll want to make sure you're also replacing electrolytes.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ELECTROLYTES

Electrolytes are minerals (i.e., sodium, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and phosphate) that help keep us healthy, especially when we physically exert ourselves. They support the electrical charges our bodies need for muscle and nerve function. Electrolytes also help balance fluids in the body, which supports blood volume, blood pressure, and cellular function.

Unless you are a high-level athlete, it is unnecessary to consume large quantities of sports beverages to replace electrolytes. Especially not the types of sports drinks that contain negative ingredients, such as artificial colors, artificial flavors, artificial sweeteners, crystalline fructose, or preservatives.

There are many healthy sources of electrolytes you can consume instead of sports drinks. Food-based sources of electrolytes include apples, beets, green beans, lemons, limes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, raw nuts and seeds, dark leafy greens, and bananas.

Adding these foods to your diet, either whole or in juiced form, can help maintain your electrolyte levels. Another good way to support your system when working out is to make a beverage that helps to balance your electrolytes.

Electrolyte-Rich Beverage



Ingredients

- 1-quart green or herbal tea
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp calcium magnesium powder
- 1 tsp raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar or fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)

Instructions

- Brew tea
- Let steep 3-4 minutes
- Add remaining ingredients
- If desired, you can add flavorings such as fresh ginger root, mint, fresh berries, fresh citrus, or any fresh flavors you enjoy.



SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT ALKALINE BEVERAGES?

Because the first thing you drink every day is really important why not start with something that's going to be good for your health?

When working with clients, I regularly remind people to start their day with an alkalizing beverage. This invariably brings up the question, "What is an alkalizing beverage and why do I need to drink it?"

Second question first. Your body does better when it is in a more alkaline state. If you happen to remember from your high school biology class, a pH of 7.0 is base or neutral. You should be somewhere between 7.2-7.4 in order to be healthy. When your body is in a more acidic state you can potentially be prone to illness.

Effects of PH Imabalance



Maintaining an acidic body state for a long period of time can cause a wide variety of illnesses such as headaches, inflammation, bloating, acne, hair or nails that break easily, and other symptoms.

Because the body seeks balance, if it is too acidic it will pull minerals from your bones and from muscle tissue. Eventually, you can experience a significant depletion of minerals.

How to Maintain PH Balance



However, simply drinking alkalizing beverages isn't enough. You actually need to consume a more alkaline diet. Our modern American diet tends to be highly acidic, especially when it's high in processed foods and animal products. So in order to shift away from high acidity, it's a good idea to include more alkalizing foods in your diet.

Ideally, most people appear to do best when they consume a diet that is 60-70% alkalizing foods. This includes:

- asparagus
- celery
- dark leafy greens
- onions
- sweet potatoes
- parsnips
- strawberries
- raspberries
- lemons
- limes
- honeydew melon

In addition to making sure you add alkalizing foods to your diet, it can be a good idea to start the day with an alkalizing drink.

However, it's important to know that just drinking alkaline water isn't going to alkalize your body. Studies indicate that drinking alkaline water does not increase body pH.

That doesn't mean there aren't any benefits though. Drinking naturally alkaline water may help decrease the enzyme that can cause acid reflux. Other research seems to indicate that drinking alkaline water may be beneficial for people with conditions such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and/or high blood pressure.

What is an Alkalizing Beverage?



Rather than simply drinking alkaline water, consider having a glass of water with 1-2 tablespoons of lemon juice or raw apple cider vinegar. If you're not used to the tartness of either of these you may have to work up to it by starting with 1 teaspoon in a glass of water and increasing a teaspoon at a time.

Adding a greens powder to water or a morning smoothie is another way to get an alkalizing beverage into your day. Another option would be to drink kombucha or water kefir, either plain or adding a healthy slug to water glass. This can be a great start to the day and one that has the added benefit of probiotics to further support gut health.

Vinegar and Lemons Are Acidic so How Can They Be Alkalizing?



It's one of the odd properties of acid-alkaline balance. Yes, we do consider them to be acidic however their ash, or residue after they have been broken down, is alkaline. That makes them alkalizing food. This alkalizing effect is also found with limes and grapefruits however not with oranges.

If you want to test to see whether your specific body state is more alkaline or more acidic you can purchase a First Morning Urine Ph Kit. These strips test either urine or saliva (urine is generally considered to be a better indicator).

So yes, it's a good idea to start your day with an alkalizing beverage and drink for your health. And then evaluate your diet to add more alkalizing foods.



WHY SODA IS BAD FOR YOU

When you're thirsty you might think that any beverage you choose to drink could be hydrating. Unfortunately, that's not true. One very popular beverage choice for people of all ages tends to be soda which can actually be damaging to your health.

Health Challenges



Soda is essentially a non-nutritive sugar sweetened beverage (SSB). The sugars can make soda the equivalent of a liquid candy bar. Easy to drink, a soda doesn't fill you up, but those calories add up and that sugar load hits your blood stream very quickly.

Choosing sugar free sodas isn't any better. All artificial sweeteners have been shown to be harmful. Glucose intolerance, metabolic syndrome, obesity, gut dysbiosis, exacerbation of autoimmune disorders, migraines, and more, have all been shown to have links to artificial sweetener consumption.

Here are the top four health issues related to drinking sodas:

Weight gain

Although soda is only one form of SSB (sports drinks, energy drinks, sweet tea, and fruit drinks or nectars are others), it is the sugary beverage most consumed across nearly all age groups. Dozens of studies have found a clear link between drinking soda and obesity. This was true for both children and adults. It appears that SSB's, especially soda, are among the leading causes of obesity in the U.S.

If your SSB contains caffeine this can be another way that it contributes to weight gain. A modest amount of caffeine, 1-2 8 ounce servings, can be well tolerated by some and may provide health benefits. Overconsumption of caffeine, however, not only causes jitteriness, it may increase anxiety, or interfere with sleep. It can also potentially spike insulin and interfere with blood glucose levels.

Obesity and diabetes often go hand-in-hand and SSBs have been found to be part of the equation. The Nurses' Health Study looked at more than 90,000 over an eight year period of time. It found that drinking more SSBs was positively correlated with increased weight gain as well as a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

Damaging to Bones and Teeth



Your tooth enamel is more sensitive than you think it is. Drinking SSBs, with their high acidity and often high sugar content, can be very damaging to dental enamel. One study looked at a wide variety of beverages including Coca Cola, Sprite, Red Bull, apple juice, orange juice, lemon juice, and water. Straight lemon juice was shown to be the most corrosive (not a surprise really, but then again I don't recommend drinking straight lemon juice).

The biggest surprise, however, was that although all of the SSBs showed damage to the teeth, Sprite and apple juice were the worst. This does not even take into account the impact on the body from all the sugars discussed above.

Sodas, particularly colas, have been found to interfere with bone density in both men and women. Possibly due to the high acidity of the SSBs which require the body to release alkalizing minerals from the bones in order to counteract the acidity. The Framingham Osteoporosis Study found intake of cola correlated with much lower bone density in the hips for women. While this particular study seemed to indicate that this was specific to colas, a different study found SSB consumption in general was linked with decreased bone mineral density.

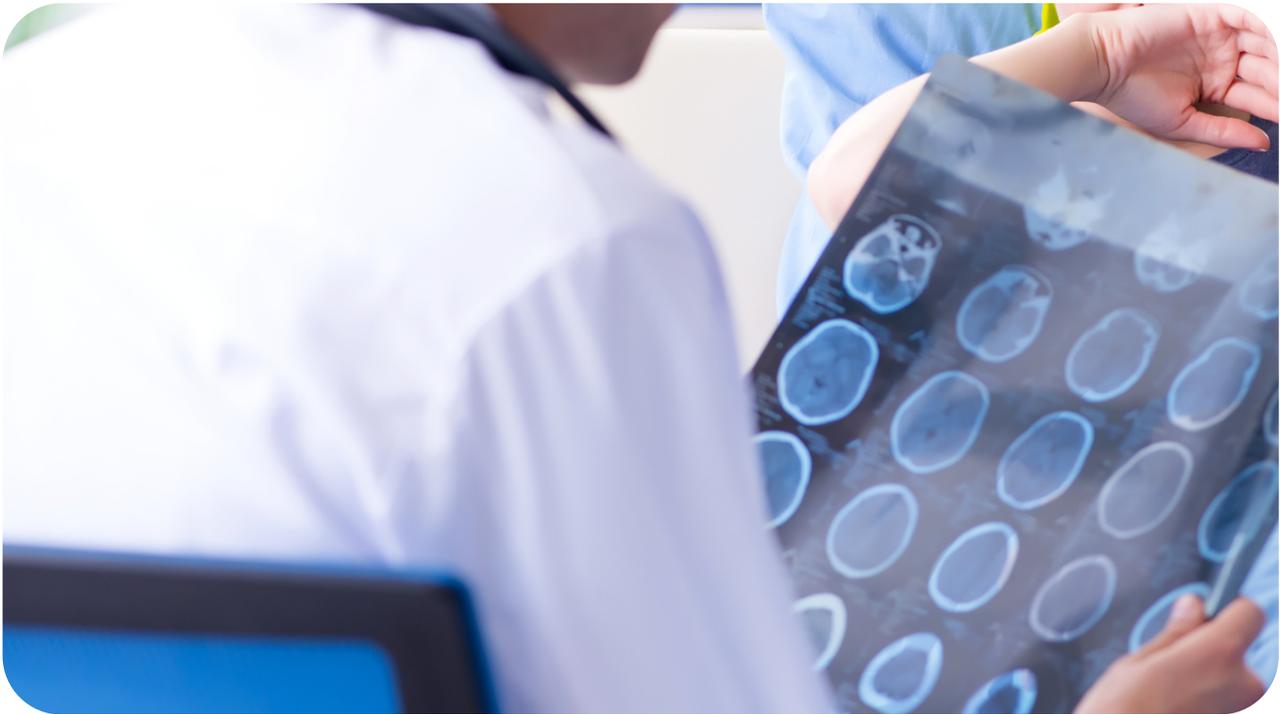
In addition to the impact on bones, joints can also be affected by high SSB consumption. As part of the Nurses' Health Study more than 185,000 women were followed in two cohorts over a nearly 30 year period of time. The results of the study showed those who drank a little as one serving of soda per day had an increased risk of developing seropositive rheumatoid arthritis. This risk was as much as 63% higher than those who drank 1 serving per month or less.

Fatty Liver Disease



One very common sweetener for soda, and other SSBs, is high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). There are clear correlations between HFCS consumption, inflammation of the liver, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). NAFLD, in turn, can be related to diabetes, cardiovascular health issues, and atherosclerosis. which can in turn be related to metabolic syndrome. Consuming HFCS has also been shown to raise triglyceride levels.

Cancer



In addition to the sugar or artificial sweeteners, two ingredients found in soda that are particularly concerning are benzene and caramel color. Both have been strongly linked to cancer.

Benzene is a known carcinogen. Although it is regulated in water its presence in sodas are not. Benzoate salts (sodium or potassium benzoate) are added to prevent the bacteria, mold, or yeast growth. But when combined with ascorbic acid (vitamin C) it becomes benzene.

Caramel color is created from ammonium compounds. The sugars in the soda can combine with both sulfites and these ammonium compounds to create 4-methylimidazole and 2-methylimidazole. Both of these substances have been linked to cancers, especially for the lungs and the liver.

Consuming SSBs, in any form, has the potential to have a wide variety of significant health impacts on your system. In some cases it can be caused by as little as one serving per day. Rather than drinking sugars, of any kind, including the artificial ones, it is best to eliminate SSBs from your diet and hydrate in other ways.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T LIKE WATER

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, sugar-sweetened beverages (i.e., fruit juice, soda, sports drinks) account for 36% of the added sugar Americans consume. Significant numbers of people reach for juice, thinking that it's going to help quench their thirst. Unfortunately, it doesn't really work that way.

Straight-up juice is really high in sugar. As an example, it can take several oranges to make one 8-ounce glass of orange juice. That single orange has about 12 grams of sugar. But it also comes with a lot of fiber to help slow down how fast that sugar hits your bloodstream. The orange juice, on the other hand, has over 20 grams of sugar and no fiber. It's going to cause a sugar rush really quickly. And it doesn't really help with hydration.

And don't forget that fruit sugar, fructose, has also been shown to burden the liver and increase belly fat. Fruit juice should really be considered a treat food, and only drunk rarely and in moderation.

Experimental studies show sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), like those sodas, lead to weight gain because they have a significant amount of calories. And people don't eat less to compensate because those SSBs aren't filling or provide lasting energy.

There's no fiber, fat, or protein present to slow the progression from liquid sugar to blood sugar, which can lead to inflammation, insulin resistance and increase the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Now is a great time to break your family's juice and/or soda habit (or never start one).

Some people claim they don't drink water simply because they don't like it. Often, it's because plain water isn't flavorful. Fortunately, there's a quick and easy solution - adding flavor by infusion.

Infused Water Tips



Infusing water is the process of adding fruits, vegetables, and herbs to your water, then letting these ingredients flavor the water. Infusion not only provides delicious flavor with an array of possible combinations, but it also adds some nutrients from the produce and herbs. This can further improve the healthfulness of your water. Infused water is very easy to make, but there are a few things you need to know first.

Types of Water to Use



The first thing you need to know is that filtered water is always better. Unfortunately, most residential water is highly contaminated with fluoride, chlorine, pharmaceutical residues, and environmental chemicals. Filtering water can remove these additives, which will improve the overall quality and flavor of your infused water.

To remove fluoride, you'll need to check and make sure your filter handles that. If not, get a different filter.

For more information about what's really in your water, please see the resource section at the end of the book.

When making an infusion, you should use either room temperature or cold water. Avoid warm or hot water as it can cause the produce to fall apart at a rapid rate, reducing the nutrients in your infused water.

Choose Organic When Possible



If at all possible, try to select organic fruits and vegetables - especially for the Dirty Dozen. While organic produce and herbs can usually be found in your supermarket, some better options might be to get them from a weekly CSA or farmer's market or contacting local farmers directly. This allows you to get the freshest fruits and vegetables that you know were grown locally without added fertilizers and other chemicals. Plus, organic produce usually provides a better flavor for infused water.

The Dirty Dozen are those conventionally-grown fruits and vegetables which are most highly contaminated by pesticides. To avoid the high toxin load from pesticides, it's important to buy these organically. The list changes every year. Get the Environmental Working Group (EWG) App to stay on top of the current list each year. It's free.

How to Prepare Your Ingredients



After selecting the ingredients you want to use in your infused water, you need to prep them before putting them into the pitcher. Always rinse the fruits and vegetables to make sure no chemicals are left on them. Even with organic produce, it is still a good idea to rinse it and make sure it's clean. If you are using herbs, you should crush them to release the oils. Leafy herbs, such as mint or basil, are an exception and can simply be torn to release their fragrant oils.

Most fruits and vegetables need to be cut at least in half before being put in the pitcher, which allows them to release their flavors. Like cucumber and apples, hard fruits and vegetables need to be cut into thin slices since they take longer to flavor the water. With softer items, such as berries and citrus fruit, simply cutting them in half or quarters is sufficient. Fruits such as grapes, peaches, and plums also need to be cut; otherwise, their skin will prevent them from infusing the water. Be aware that citrus fruits will remain fresher for longer, while melons will get soft and mushy rather quickly.

Containers for Making Infused Water



Now you're ready to start putting your infused water together, but what do you make it in? It's important to make sure you have the right container. While you can technically use anything, a glass pitcher is usually recommended. Plastic pitchers are not a good choice, in part because they won't keep the water as fresh.

You also want to skip the plastic to avoid exposure to the hormone-disrupting chemicals used to make it. These chemicals can leach into the water very easily, especially when using certain fresh ingredients like citrus.

Depending on your budget, there are pitchers and cups available specifically for infusing. They typically have a long and narrow section in the middle, called an infusion core, with holes or slots so the flavor can be released. This core is where you put your herbs and fruit to create your infusion. The core makes it very easy to remove the produce when you are done infusing. Alternatively, you can use wide-mouthed glass mason jars or bottles, and after infusing the water, you can transfer the water to a glass drinking container while using a strainer to remove the produce.

How Long to Infuse the Water



When making infused water, add the produce and herbs first, then add room temperature or cold water. Next, let the water infuse to get good flavors and nutrients from the fruits and vegetables. If you are leaving it out on the counter, flavorful infusion is usually finished in about 2 hours (unless using a large, multi-gallon container). If you're creating your infusion in the refrigerator, you'll want to wait 4-6 hours. For a more intense flavor, you can leave it in the refrigerator overnight, depending on the produce you select. For example, some produce tends to soften quickly, and others, like citrus with the peel, can create a bitter taste if infused for too long.

The ideal time to drink infused water is within 24-48 hours after the infusing process is complete, and it is usually best to drink it the same day. It's not recommended to keep the water for more than 2 days as the flavors may begin to turn. Make sure that you are not leaving the fruits and vegetables in the water for days; they should be removed after several hours with only the flavored water remaining in the pitcher. If you make small containers and you're drinking your infused water the same day, you can usually refill your container 2-3 times with the produce in the pitcher or cup and still get good flavor from it. This is best done only if you are infusing in the refrigerator, not leaving the infusion out at room temperature.



FLAVORFUL FUN

I've listed a few of my favorite flavor combinations for infused water below, but you're really only limited by your own imagination. Put together whatever you like. Be sure to try some new things, too; you may surprise yourself and discover a new favorite combination.

It's worth noting that you don't have to only use water when making your infusions. One of my favorite things to do is to start with a base of tea in the summertime. I love tea, and this can be a great way to start things off. I recommend using green tea, herbal, or rooibos teas. This will lend a delicious flavor to your beverage and encourage you to drink more.

Green tea does contain caffeine, so use it sparingly and consider not having it after 2:00 PM to avoid any impact on your sleep cycle.

Here are some great flavor combinations to try:

- apple + cinnamon sticks
- blackberry + sage
- blueberries + strawberries
- apple + cinnamon sticks
- blueberries + strawberries
- cantaloupe + mint + lime
- cucumber + jalapeno
- cucumber + lime
- cucumber + rosemary
- grapefruit + thyme
- lemon + strawberry + rosemary
- orange + ginger
- pineapple + jalapeno + lime slices
- pineapple + mint
- raspberries + lemon
- strawberry + basil
- watermelon + basil

Party Water



One of the nicest things about infused water is that it's perfect when you're serving a crowd - at a barbecue, luncheon, or any kind of social gathering. It's not only prettier than a case or two of those plastic water bottles, but it's also tastier and better for the environment too.

When making water in a large infusion container for a party, don't forget that you'll need to adjust how much fruit and flavoring you put in the container. You should allow the water to infuse for 3-4 hours before serving while leaving room to add the ice later. This way, your infused water will be both delicious and refreshingly cool.

Instant Pot Infusions



Ever since I was gifted an Instant Pot, I have fallen in love with this device. It's amazing how easy it is to prepare so many different foods, making the Instant Pot my can't-live-without-it kitchen device. And just when I thought I was the queen of instant pot cookery (because I learned how to make amazing bone broth in it), my friend Rachel blew my mind by telling me that she made infused waters in her Instant Pot. The instructions are so simple. Honestly, once she shared with me, I couldn't help but wonder, "Why didn't I think of that?" This is a great way to make a large batch of infused water very quickly.

Because of the pressure, this tends to be a more concentrated infusion. You may want to dilute the finished infusion. Rachel's suggestion is to add a little ice plus some seltzer for a bit of a fizzy zing. You can also freeze your instant pot infusion in ice cube trays. Then simply add the cubes to cold water and drink later.

Ingredients

5 cups of water

1- 1 ½ cups fruit flavoring ingredient (lemons, cinnamon, basil, etc.) be cautious with the amount of flavoring ingredients because the pressure really intensifies them

Instructions

Place all ingredients into the Instant Pot

Close and bring to pressure

Cook 5 minutes

Quick-release

Mash the fruit to extract all the liquid and flavor

Strain and cool before serving

However you make your infused water, and whatever flavor combinations you put together, the most important thing is that you are hydrating. By adding proper hydration to your day, you are supporting your body and your health.

Hydrating Foods



Hydration can be more than just drinking water. Lots of foods can be good choices to help with your daily hydration need. Food sources such as smoothies and cold soups can be hydrating and also satisfy your appetite.

Specific foods which are high in water content include:

- Apple - tends to be highly contaminated with pesticides, so it is worthwhile to purchase these organic. High in fiber, vitamin C, and flavonol quercetin, which is beneficial for heart health, blood sugar stabilization is also considered anti-inflammatory.
- Bok choy - low in calories and high in vitamins A, C, calcium, and fiber. Like most cabbages, it is believed to be anti-carcinogenic. There are some concerns about pesticide use with this vegetable, and an organic purchase is suggested.
- Carrots - in addition to being an excellent source of vitamin A, carrots also provide good levels of fiber, vitamin C, K, and potassium. Highly antioxidant, they are considered a good cardiovascular support food.

- **Cantaloupe** – extremely high in vitamins A and C, cantaloupes are also a good source of potassium. The high levels of vitamin A make them very supportive of lung health, while the high levels of A and C make them a good choice for eye health. Be sure to wash thoroughly before cutting open.
- **Cucumbers** – very high in vitamin K, considered antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. Because they are one of the “dirty dozen,” purchase these organic whenever possible.
- **Celery** – another great source of vitamin K, high in fiber, and studies indicate that it can help reduce blood pressure. Another “dirty dozen” veggie; choose organic whenever possible.
- **Cherries** – very high in vitamin C and a good source of potassium, cherries come in both tart and sweet varieties. Shown to be effective for helping to reduce blood pressure, it seems cherries may also support collagen health.
- **Grapefruit** – very high in vitamin C with a very high antioxidant level. As with most citrus, it also contains limonoids, a phytonutrient that appears to help reduce tumors.
- **Peaches** – purchase organic due to the high levels of pesticide contamination. Highly antioxidant, a good source of fiber, vitamin C, and potassium. Peaches are believed to help support healthy skin due to their high levels of phytonutrients.
- **Plums** – high in vitamin A, C, K, and fiber, also help the body absorb more iron from iron-rich foods. Highly supportive of eye health, studies show that plums may lower the risk of age-related macular degeneration.
- **Strawberries** – another pesticide-laden fruit, these are best purchased organic. Very high in vitamin C, it also provides manganese and fiber. Not only are they anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory, but emerging research also seems to indicate that daily intake of strawberries may be related to a reduction in inflammatory bowel disease.

- Organic tomatoes – a great source of antioxidants and high in vitamins A, C, K, and potassium. In addition to being cardio-supportive new research appears to indicate that organic tomatoes may also be beneficial for bone health, especially in post-menopausal women.
- Watermelon – very high in vitamin C, also provides a good source of vitamin A, some potassium, and magnesium. Watermelon is considered an anti-inflammatory, alkalizing fruit.
- Yogurt – in addition to being a good source of calcium, live culture yogurt also provides probiotics, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, and protein. As a dairy product, it is also one of our few food sources of vitamin D. Organic is the best choice to avoid antibiotics, hormones, and GMO feed. It's also important to get whole milk yogurt as the vitamin D in the yogurt is a fat-soluble vitamin (meaning it needs to be eaten with fat for the body to utilize properly). Choose the plain variety and add fresh fruit if needed for sweetness to avoid the added sugars.
- Kefir – a delicious fermented yogurt, kefir is thinner and has a tangy tart flavor to it. With all the benefits of yogurt, kefir adds a little extra probiotic punch as the fermentation increases probiotic activity.

Try to include more of these fabulous and tasty foods into your summertime diet. Not only will they provide nutritional support, but they'll also help keep you hydrated.



SEASONAL HYDRATION TIPS

You need to remember to think differently about hydration at different times of the year. That's because our perception of how thirsty we are changes depending on the weather, our activity levels, and what we're eating (more on that below).

In the summertime, when you're running around, it's all too easy and tempting to grab something at the convenience store while you're filling up your car. But before you reach for that cheap 54-oz Big Gulp, think about what your body needs in terms of hydration. It certainly doesn't need all that sugar. An 8-oz can of Sprite claims that it has 26 g of sugar, multiplied by 6.75 to equal a 54-oz drink, that comes to 175.5 g of sugar, not to mention all those chemicals. If you're drinking sugar-free, you are taking in even more chemicals. And let's not forget that caffeinated sodas would deliver a jolting 155 mg of caffeine.

If you're used to drinking soda, one healthier option is to buy a seltzer maker. Avoid the flavored, chemical-laden additives, use some of the delicious flavor infusions above to make a tasty fizzy drink, and start to break yourself of the soda habit. This has an added eco-friendly benefit of reducing your plastic waste. When you're making your own "soda water," you won't throw out endless amounts of plastic bottles. I have had my machine for over 3 years, and my bottles are still going strong.

Other popular summer drinks include the thought of a refreshing cold beer on a hot day, or perhaps a wine spritzer or an alcopop. As enjoyable as an adult beverage is, you need to remember that alcohol is a diuretic. This means you lose more body fluids when you drink it. So even though on a hot summer day that beer, wine cooler, or mixed drink may seem cool and refreshing, it won't help you stay healthy and hydrated. My suggestion is to alternate alcohol with water to make sure you don't dehydrate.

Agua Fresca



One very refreshing summer drink is Agua fresca (Spanish for fresh waters). It's a delicious non-alcoholic summer-y drink with origins in Mexico, where street vendors sell it. In South and Central American stores or restaurants, you can sometimes find it in large containers ladled out by the glassful. Agua fresca is a great drink for warm weather. It's a hydrating and satisfying thirst quencher that is much better than soda or over-sugared bottled drinks and fountain drinks.

It's usually made with fruit, lime juice, and water. Watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberry, and pineapple are popular flavors. When you make agua fresca at home, the ingredients can be adjusted for personal taste. Often there's no need to add sugar because the fruits are sweet enough on their own. Because you don't strain the liquid after blending it (unless it's too thick, in which case you can lightly strain to remove larger pieces), you're also getting some of the healthy fiber.

What Fruits to Use



Just about any fruit or fruit combination is fair game when it comes to agua fresca. Of course, you'll need water and lime juice. Substitute lemon if you're out of limes, but trust me, it's somehow better with lime juice. Mangos, peaches, pineapple, there's really no limit to the tasty and refreshing combinations you can make.

One of my personal choices for a great agua fresca is watermelon which is abundantly available in the summertime. Juicy and delicious, watermelon is rich in vitamin C and lycopene as well as electrolytes, potassium, and sodium. This makes it a fabulous choice for summertime when we tend to lose a lot of electrolytes through perspiration. Get my favorite recipe in the recipes section below.

Luciano Pavarotti once said, "Watermelon, it's a great fruit. You eat, you drink, you wash your face." If you're eating it, that's certainly true. With an agua fresca, you can still enjoy the wonderful flavor and not have to worry about the wash your face part.



HOW TO HYDRATE IN THE WINTER

You may be wondering why you need to hydrate in cold weather. We're used to thinking about hydration when it's hot outside. After all, when we're active and sweating, we're losing moisture. In the winter, we're bundled up and possibly not feeling fluid loss. So you may not think about the importance of winter hydration. It turns out staying hydrated in the winter is equally as important as it is in the warmer months.

During these colder, usually dryer, months, you are drying out both through your skin and by breathing. When cold, dry winter air hits your lungs, they have to warm it up and humidify it. This takes moisture from your body. And if you're spending lots of time outside, especially if you're a winter sports enthusiast, you'll need even more hydration because the more effort you expend, the more humidity your body releases.

If you're sweating, you may not realize how much moisture you're losing. That's because when it's dry out, sweat evaporates much more quickly. And because you're already cold, you may not notice the increased cooling that comes from sweat drying.

Winter tends to be the time of year when we turn to warm liquids such as herbal tea and soup. This is not only a comforting idea, but it's also better for us. This is because room temperature or warmer liquids actually help to stabilize your core temperature.

The types of liquid you consume during the winter are also important. Avoiding excess consumption of caffeine (found not only in coffee and tea but also in that wintertime favorite, hot chocolate) and alcohol is helpful. Both have diuretic qualities and can contribute to dehydration.

Top Tips to Avoid Dehydration



These are some strategies you can use, in addition to making sure you're getting plenty of fluids, to help avoid dehydration:

- Bring a water bottle with you everywhere you go - This tip is year-round, not just for summertime.
- Layer appropriately - Have layers that you can add and remove as needed. Overdressing so that you are hot and sweaty actually contributes to hydration loss
- Use a humidifier in your home - This is to help keep the air comfortably moist. Your dry skin and static-y clothes will thank you.
- Take just a moment to calculate your hydration factor, and then...
- Drink up to a new, healthier you!



RECIPES

These are a few of my favorite recipes that help support proper hydration (plus, they're really tasty). Enjoy!

Melon Agua Fresca



Ingredients

3 cups of melon (cantaloupe, watermelon, honeydew, etc.), seeded, peeled, and diced
1 1/2 cups cold water
juice of 1-2 limes

Instructions

Blend melon to a pulp in the blender
Strain pulp to remove fibers
In a pitcher, mix together water and melon juice, stirring to combine
Add lime juice to taste
Serve over ice

Gazpacho



Gazpacho is a cool, delicious summer soup. Originally from the Andalusia region of Spain, it's a chilled version of summer salad in soup form. I've even seen it referred to as liquid salad. That term always struck me as a bit silly. It's either a soup or it's a salad. Except, as it turns out, if it's gazpacho. Then it's sort of both.

The original version calls for bread cubes, preferably a little stale; however, I don't think they're necessary. There are also versions that include chopped ham but, again, I don't think you really need that. I love gazpacho with just vegetables. It's so easy to make, very refreshing, and a great way to get a heaping serving of veggies into your day.

This version came about when my daughter and I were trying to figure out what to make for lunch one hot Texas summer day. Rummaging through the fridge, we realized that we had all of the ingredients on hand to make gazpacho. With the temperatures rising into the 90's this cool, flavorful soup was a great idea.

The texture of gazpacho is rather a personal preference. My daughter prefers it extra chunky; I prefer smaller dice. You can also lightly blend all of the ingredients for a smooth, creamy texture.

Additionally, traditional recipes call for you to remove some of the vegetables and puree them to make it the soupy bit. We chose to use the shortcut method and simply added some tomato juice. Any way you make it, it's delicious.

Ingredients

- 1 cucumber
- 2 large tomatoes
- Tomato juice
- 1 small Vidalia onion
- 1 sweet bell pepper
- 2 stalks of celery
- 1 zucchini or yellow squash
- 1 clove of garlic, crushed
- 1/4 C. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Diced avocado
- Chopped cilantro

Instructions

- Dice all vegetables through zucchini
- Add garlic, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper
- Cover with tomato juice (we didn't measure - just poured until it covered the veggies)
- Place in the refrigerator and chill for at least two hours
- To serve ladle into a bowl and drizzle with olive oil
- Garnish with diced avocado and chopped cilantro

Tropicolada Smoothie



A smoothie can be a cooling and refreshing way to hydrate. With the addition of some healthy fats, booster foods (like the bee pollen and flax seeds), plus a little protein powder, it's not only hydrating; it's nourishing as well.

Ingredients

- 3/4 C organic coconut milk (the full-fat stuff from the can)
- 1 cup pineapple chunks
- 1/4 C dried coconut
- 1 heaping tsp ground flax
- 1/2 tsp bee pollen
- 3 dates
- 1 tablespoon protein powder
- 1 cup crushed ice

Roasted Vegetable Soup with Fennel and Tomato



When the weather gets chilly and the days get shorter, most of us find an increased desire for soup. Nourishing and warming, soup seems to really hit the spot. Plus, it's so versatile. Soup is great as a snack, as a meal starter, or in some cases as a meal all by itself.

This particular roasted vegetable soup is a favorite. After all, who doesn't love tomato soup? But part of what makes this so wonderful is the fennel which gives it a delicious flavor boost. This soup tastes even better the second day, so be sure to make a lot (this recipe doubles or even triples with ease) to ensure you have leftovers.

Ingredients

1½ lbs. Roma tomatoes halved
2 medium red bell peppers, deseeded and quartered
1 large fennel bulb, thinly sliced
2 large carrots, cut in half lengthwise
2 medium shallots, outer skin removed and halved
4 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
2 T. extra virgin olive oil
Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
2 T. fresh thyme leaves
4 C organic chicken bone broth
½ C full-fat coconut milk
½ C fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°F

Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a baking mat and set it aside

Arrange the tomatoes, red peppers, fennel, carrots, shallots, and garlic in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet

Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and black pepper to taste

Toss to combine and sprinkle veggies with fresh thyme leaves

Place baking sheet in preheated oven and roast until vegetables are tender and lightly charred, approximately 20-25 minutes

Transfer the roasted veggies and any juices from the baking sheet to a large soup pot and add the bone broth

Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until hot and bubbly

Remove from heat

Using an immersion blender, blend the contents of the soup pot until completely smooth

Stir in the coconut milk and fresh basil, and serve

Safety Tip: If you don't have a stick or immersion blender, it is possible to use a blender to process the cooked veggies and liquid. However, it is important to be sure your blender lid is vented properly to prevent the hot liquid from exploding when you turn on the blender.

Nourishing Broth Recipe



This is my easy-peasy, very delicious bone broth recipe. It's a multi-purpose recipe because we get the broth and the delicious shredded chicken to use in a variety of other dishes.

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken or 2 to 3 pounds of bony chicken parts, such as necks, backs, breastbones, and wings (organic, free-range preferred)
- Gizzards from one chicken (optional but preferred)
- 2-4 chicken feet (optional but preferred)
- 4 quarts cold filtered water
- 2 tablespoons raw apple cider vinegar
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 3 celery stalks, coarsely chopped
- 1 bunch parsley

Instructions

If using a whole chicken, cut off the wings and remove the neck, fat glands, and gizzards from the cavity.

Cut chicken parts into several pieces. Place chicken or chicken pieces in a large stainless steel pot with water, vinegar, and all vegetables except parsley.

Let stand 30 minutes to 1 hour. Bring to a boil, and remove scum that rises to the top. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 6 to 8 hours. The longer the stock cooks, the richer and more flavorful it will be. About 10 minutes before finishing the stock, add parsley. This will impart additional mineral ions to the broth.

Remove whole chicken or pieces with a slotted spoon. If using a whole chicken, let cool and remove chicken meat from the carcass—reserve for other uses, such as chicken salads, enchiladas, sandwiches, or curries. Strain the stock into a large bowl and reserve in the refrigerator until the fat rises to the top and congeals. Skim off this fat and reserve the stock in covered containers in the refrigerator or freezer.

RESOURCES

To learn more about your water and the health and environmental impact of what's in it, you'll want to [watch my interview with Lara Adler](#), The Environmental Toxins Expert.

Lara has been teaching about the issues with water contamination and filtration since 2012. You need to know about your geo-individual water source before you can make the best decisions for your filtration needs. Lara's [PURE Program](#) helps you with that.

One of my favorite water bottles is a glass bottle encased in plastic, so it's shatterproof. Made by Glasstic, they claim it's the last water bottle you'll ever need. [Get yours for 10% off using this link.](#)

Another option is a [tea-infusion glass water bottle](#) that comes with a silicone sleeve to protect it. This particular one comes with amethyst crystals (a crystal representing balance, calmness, creativity, intuition, and peace) in the base to infuse the crystal energy into the water.

If you want to make a whole pitcher of infused water, it's important to remember that many infusion pitchers may be glass, but the infusion core, or rod, isn't. And truthfully, who wants to struggle with filling (and cleaning!) the infusion core every time you want a new pitcher of water. That's why I like this one with a [filter top](#) which allows you to infuse the water but holds back the additions, so they don't wind up in your glass.

As mentioned above, you can also freeze infused water into ice cubes and use them later. This [silicone set](#) makes large and small ice cubes (the large ones are great for cooling down a party-sized pitcher).

If you're going to drink [tea](#) as part of your hydration plan, be sure you know what's in it before drinking it.

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