

HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD I DRINK?

'Eat when hungry, drink when thirsty'
Zen Maxim

Perhaps the most important principle regarding personal water consumption is listening to the wisdom of one's own body, and drinking according to thirst.

However, drinking water with, before, or after meals may have a negative effect. It causes digestive enzymes and secretions to become diluted and the foods nutrients are not effectively extracted. Drinking copious amounts of water through the day does not necessarily benefit health as it can flood our system and cause sensations of coldness and weaken the energy of the body as a whole. This view is supported by the Chinese healing traditions, which state that an excess of water depletes the 'digestive fire' of the spleen and the pancreas and hinders the kidney-adrenals ability to provide warmth and energy.

Our Western diet is generally too dry, some of the worst offenders are the 'healthy' products like rice cakes, oatcakes, cereal bars and toasted muesli. The need to drink water seems to have increased in direct proportion with the de-naturing of our diet. In recent years Western nutritionists have been urging us to drink more water.

However, the optimal water intake for individuals varies widely, and a person's requirements can be far different from one day to the next. Below are the key factors that influence a person's water needs:-

Water requirements are lessened by:-

- sedentary lifestyle
- consumptions of fruit, vegetables and sprouted food (they contain 90%+ water)
- cold and deficient conditions
- cold or damp climates

Water requirements are increased by:-

- physical activity
- consumption of more meat, eggs, or salty foods
- fever or hot conditions
- conditions that need cleansing like rheumatism, arthritis, gout
- dry, hot or windy climates

Key guidelines for drinking water

- 1) **Drink when you are thirsty**
- 2) **Don't flood your system with water**
- 3) **Don't drink a lot of water around meal times.**
- 4) **Eat more liquid food i.e. more soups, stews, vegetable**
- 5) **Drink herbal teas**