

Why hydration matters

Staying hydrated helps your body:

- Remove waste and medicines after treatment
- Keep energy levels up and reduce fatigue
- Protect your kidneys and liver
- Prevent dizziness, constipation, and dry mouth
- Support healing and help your body handle treatment better

Why drinking fluids by mouth is usually better than intravenous (IV) fluids

Whenever possible, **oral hydration (drinking fluids)** is the best way to stay hydrated.

Drinking fluids (by mouth)

- Keeps your stomach and intestines working
- Provides nutrients, electrolytes, and calories
- Can be done anytime, anywhere
- No needle, no infection risk

IV Fluids

- Skips your stomach and intestines, may slow gut function over time
- Usually only provides water and salt
- Requires a clinic visit or IV line
- Small risk of infection
- Requires a nurse or doctor

How much should you drink?

Most people need **8-10 cups (about 2-2.5 liters)** of fluids each day.

You may need **more** if you have:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- A fever
- Lots of sweating

What are some hydrating foods and drinks (besides plain water)?

You don't have to rely on water alone! Many foods and drinks help you stay hydrated.

Flavored or enhanced drinks

- **Infused water:** Add slices of lemon, lime, cucumbers, berries, or mint for light flavor.
- **Herbal teas:** Caffeine-free options like chamomile, ginger, or peppermint are soothing and hydrating.
- **Diluted juice:** Mix half juice, half water for flavor with less sugar.
- **Electrolyte drinks:** Low-sugar options like Pedialyte, Liquid I.V., or coconut water help replace salts and minerals.

Staying Hydrated During Cancer Treatment

Other beverages

- **Broths and soups:** Chicken, vegetable, or bone broth provide both fluids and electrolytes.
- **Milk or milk alternatives:** Skim milk, soy, oat, or almond milk add hydration plus protein and calories.
- **Smoothies:** Blend fruit, yogurt, and water or milk for hydration and nutrients.
- **Decaf coffee and tea:** Can count toward daily fluid intake (limit caffeine as it causes dehydration or stomach upset).

Hydrating foods

- Watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew, oranges, grapes, peaches, strawberries
- Cucumber, celery, lettuce, zucchini, tomatoes, bell peppers, radishes
- Gelatin (Jell-O), popsicles, ice-pops

What are tips and tricks for patients who struggle with fluids?

- Sip small amounts throughout the day- use a straw or small cup.
- Keep refillable bottle nearby as a reminder.
- Try chilled or room temperature fluids to see what feels best.
- If fluids taste metallic or “off”, try flavored options or use plastic utensils instead of metal.
- Try electrolyte powders or drinks. There are many options such as Pedialyte, Electrolit, Gatorlyte, LMNT, Drip Drop, Nuun, Relyte, Liquid IV, Nectar Essential Daily Hydration, Cure, Moon Juice (unflavored option), coconut water, etc.

What are signs you might need more fluids?

- Very dark urine or peeing less often
- Dry mouth or thick saliva
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fast heartbeat
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Unable to keep down oral fluids

When should you call your care team?

Should you have any of the symptoms listed above, or can't keep fluids or medicine down, **contact the Symptom Support Clinic Hotline (406) 752-8672 right away.**

Early treatment can help you feel better and prevent problems.

Remember:

Staying hydrated is an important part of your cancer care. Sip fluids often during the day, eat foods that have water in them, and ask your cancer care team for help if it's hard to stay hydrated.