



Urology Consultants, Ltd.

Center for Continence Care and Pelvic Medicine

Am I Drinking Enough Fluids? How Much Is Too Much?

Our society is bombarded by television ads for weight loss, eating healthy and exercising regularly. Many people have increased their fluid intake while decreasing their solid food in the likelihood that this will help them to lose weight. Is there an excessive amount of fluid intake? How much is too much?

Increasing fluids in the evening or prior to exercise can create a demand on your bladder to process this huge amount of fluid. This increase of fluids can cause urinary frequency and urgency. Some people may have urinary incontinence from the huge amounts of fluid that the bladder has to deal with within a short period of time.

It is best to spread your fluid intake over the course of your day and then to decrease the amount in the hours before bedtime to two or three ounces.

If I have urinary leakage, should I then decrease my fluid intake? No, cutting back the amount you drink below the normal amount will not help urinary leakage. In fact, this will concentrate your urine which irritates the bladder lining and may make the leakage worse. This also may increase your chances for having a urinary tract infection.

So, how much is enough fluid intake? Fluid intake directly corresponds to your urinary output. Normal urinary output in the 24-hour period is 50 to 83 ounces or 1500 to 2500 ml. If your output is greater than 83 ounces or 2500 ml, then you are probably consuming too much fluid.

To determine your urinary output, purchase a measuring cup that will show ounces and then keep track for three to four days by measuring your urinary output for each day. Write down the time in your voiding diary/log, when you urinate, day and night. Toss this measuring device- don't use it to make cookies!

All liquids are fluids; this included yogurt, jello, ice cream, milkshakes and soups. The "correct" amount of fluid intake is also determined by the outdoor temperature combined with your physical activity, your body size and salt intake that day.

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There are some known “trigger” foods and liquids that irritate the bladder causing the urgency, frequency and in some cases, bladder pain. Some of these are listed below:

Caffeine	Coffee, tea, dark sodas, darker herb teas, chocolate
Alcoholic beverages	Liquor, wine and beer
Very acidic fruit or fruit juices	Orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime, mango, pineapple
Tomatoes	Tomato juice, red spaghetti sauce, pizza, BBQ sauce
Spicy food	Mexican, Thai, Indian, Cajun
Milk products	Milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, ice cream
Sugar	Corn sweeteners, honey, fructose, sucrose, lactose
Artificial sweeteners	Equal®, NutraSweet®, etc. especially aspartame

Water is the best beverage to drink. Ice in your water or a thin slice of lemon may make water more enjoyable to drink. Other non-irritating choices include apple juice, grape juice, pear nectar and peach nectar. Blueberry is another great choice for antioxidants.

The goal is to have pale yellow urine that does not have a foul odor. Fluid intake of 50 to 83 ounces (including the fluid from some foods) would be within the normal range.

Helping you to normalize your fluid intake is one of the conservative methods that your Urology provider can help you manage your continence problem.