

# SELF

[See all blog posts »](#)

You Don't Need 6 to 8 Glasses of Water a Day and Here's Why!

Friday, July 15, 2011 at 6:39 AM

| posted by [Amy Paturel](#)

Try as we may, we've never been able to guzzle down six to eight glasses of water per day. But is that even necessary?

As SELF reported in May, part of the problem with the famous rule of eight 8-ounce glasses a day is that it fails to account for the water we get naturally through our [diet](#).

And in a recent editorial, a general practitioner from Scotland claims the age-old advice to drink six to eight cups of water is "nonsense."

So how much water do you really need?



According to Registered Dietitian Milton Stokes, there isn't any clinical evidence to support the six-to-eight recommendation. There are too many individual variables we can't account for on a population basis -- things like activity level, [health](#) status and the heat and humidity in your environment.

In other words, four cups of fluid throughout the day (through food and liquids) might be enough for some people (particularly those who exist almost entirely indoors, and who barely move off the couch), while others might need 10 cups or more.

The bottom line: There's no cut-and-dry answer regarding how much total water each of us needs. So instead of fretting about whether you're guzzling enough H<sub>2</sub>O, Stokes recommends making sure you get enough fluid (in all its forms) to stay hydrated.

Here's how:

- **Don't fixate on how many glasses you chug:** Most of us think of a glass when the experts tell us to drink a cup. A cup is only 8 ounces; some glasses are 16 ounces, or more. Drink three 16-ounce glasses (one with [breakfast](#), one with [lunch](#) and one with [dinner](#)) and you've already met the lower end of the so-called standard.
- **Eat water-rich foods:** Hate water and can't stomach three glasses a day? Load up on water-rich foods like yogurt, grapefruit, lettuce, broccoli and watermelon (all of which have a water content of 85 percent or more)! Soup, milk and even ice pops are good options, too.
- **Check your pee:** If it's pale or straw-colored, chances are you're adequately hydrated. If it's dark yellow or orange, well, you should probably hit the water cooler. Aim for even more fluids if you're active, if it's hot outside or both. Women should drink an additional 8 to 16 ounces of water, or an electrolyte-infused beverage, for every half hour they sweat through activity and heat.

Concerned about getting water-logged? Unless you're training for a marathon, elderly or hospitalized with a life-threatening condition or guzzling gallons of water in one sitting, hyponatremia (or overhydration) is nearly impossible, says Stokes. If you are an athlete in training or if you play some seriously demanding sports, drinking fluids that contain electrolytes (instead of plain water) will help protect you from the condition.