

# ESSENTIAL NUTRIENT

Water belongs in every healthy diet

Hydration is the cornerstone of good health, playing a vital role in maintaining bodily functions and contributing to the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as type 2 diabetes and kidney stones.<sup>1</sup> Staying well-hydrated aids digestion, regulates body temperature, and promotes nutrient absorption. Water is the healthiest and most natural way to hydrate, free from calories and additives.

Recognising the importance of adequate hydration, the EU has established dietary guidelines for daily water intake for all age groups, as outlined by the Opinion of the EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition, and Allergies. While around 20% of our water comes from food, the remaining 80% should be met through fluids. This translates to a recommended water intake of about 1.6 litres per day for women and 2.0 litres for men, with individual needs varying depending on factors such as age, activity level and climate conditions.

## EFSA Recommends

Reference values for daily water intake<sup>2</sup>

Under 6 months:	<b>100-190 mL/kg</b>
6-12 months:	<b>800-1000 mL</b>
2-3 years:	<b>1300 mL</b>
4-8 years:	<b>1600 mL</b>
9-13 years:	<b>1900 mL for females 2100 mL for males</b>
Adolescents, adults and the elderly	<b>2.0 L for females 2.5 L for males</b>
Lactating women:	<b>+700 mL vs adults</b>

Choosing water makes an inexpensive contribution to our health and wellbeing.



# HEALTH AUTHORITIES AGREE

National nutritional guidelines from across Europe highlight the critical role water plays in maintaining optimal health.

## BULGARIA

Drink plenty of water every day. The best drink to satisfy thirst is drinking water and mineral water.<sup>3</sup>



## GERMANY

Drinks are at the centre of the nutritional circle, because an adequate supply of water is essential for life.<sup>4</sup>



## LUXEMBOURG

Water is the staple drink - this includes tap water, spring or mineral water and sparkling water. In hot weather and during physical activity you will need to take in more liquid.<sup>5</sup>



## MALTA

Drink adequate amounts (1.5 to 2.0 litres) of fluids, especially water, each day. Choose plain water as your beverage as often as possible.<sup>6</sup>



## NETHERLANDS

The recommendation for adults is to drink 1.5 to 2 litres per day. Water contains no calories and is good for your teeth.<sup>7</sup>



## LITHUANIA

Drink approximately 6-8 glasses of water per day. It is recommended to drink drinking water, mineralised or weakly mineralised natural mineral water.<sup>8</sup>



**Encouraging people to choose water fosters healthier habits and should be actively promoted. NMWE advocates for European guidelines and policies which promote adequate and healthy hydration for all EU citizens.**

1. In its NCD factsheet, the WHO recommends "Drink plenty of water (8–10 cups a day) instead of sugary drinks to reduce sugar intake and calorie consumption." <https://www.emro.who.int/noncommunicable-diseases/prevention/index.html>  
2. EFSA Panel on Dietetic Products, Nutrition, and Allergies (NDA). (2010). Scientific Opinion on Dietary Reference Values for water. EFSA Journal, 8(3), 1459.  
3. National Center for Public Health Protection. Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for Adults in Bulgaria. Ministry of Health, 2006.  
4. German Nutrition Society. The DGE Nutrition Circle. <https://www.dge.de/gesund-ernaehrung/gut-essen-und-trinken/dge-ernaehrungskreis/getraenke/>  
5. Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Gesund iessen. Méi beweegen (GIMB) programme. Individual nutritional requirements – adults – drinks. <https://gimb.public.lu/en/gesund-iessen/besoins-nutritionnels/adulte/boissons.html>  
6. Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate. Healthy Eating – The Mediterranean Way. Government of Malta, July 2023.  
7. Nutrition Centre (Voedingscentrum). Wheel of Five section: water, tea and coffee. <https://www.voedingscentrum.nl/nl/gezond-etten-met-de-schijf-van-vijf/wat-staat-in-de-schijf-van-vijf-en-wat-niet/water-thee-en-koffie.aspx>  
8. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. Recommendations for Healthy and Sustainable Nutrition. Health Education and Disease Prevention Centre, 2020.