

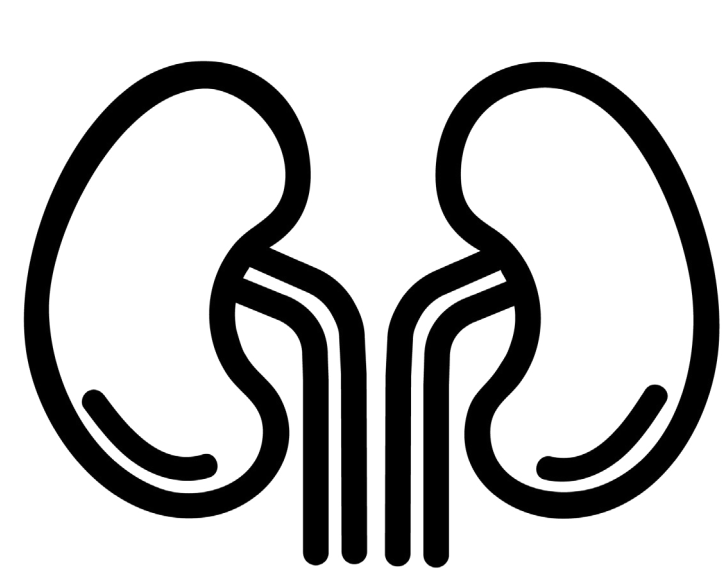
HYDRATION & KIDNEY HEALTH **CHALLENGE**

JULY

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As the heat of summer rolls in, it's not just about quenching your thirst. It's about protecting one of the most vital (and often overlooked) parts of your body: **your kidneys**.



Your kidneys work 24/7 to filter waste, balance minerals, and regulate blood pressure, but without proper hydration, they can't do their job effectively.

In fact, chronic dehydration is linked to higher risks of kidney stones, urinary tract infections, and even long-term kidney disease. This July, we're challenging you to prioritise hydration not just for energy and focus, but for long-term kidney health.

Why hydration isn't just about thirst

During the hot summer months, your body loses more water through sweat. **Drinking water regularly helps you:**

- **Maintain energy levels**
- **Prevent dehydration**
- **Reduce headaches**

Hydration also supports your digestive system, helps your muscles recover after physical activity, and boosts your overall wellbeing.

Around 10% of adults in the UK have some stage of chronic kidney disease, and most don't even know it.¹ There are often no early symptoms, which is why prevention and regular hydration are so important. When you're hydrated, you're giving your kidneys the tools they need to protect your health now and into the future.²

¹ Kidney disease: A UK public health emergency The health economics of kidney disease to 2033. Kidneyresearchuk.org. Available from: https://www.kidneyresearchuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Economics-of-Kidney-Disease-full-report_accessible

[Accessed 6th June 2025]

² Hirst JA, Hill N, O'Callaghan CA, Lasserson D, McManus RJ, Ogburn E, et al. Prevalence of chronic kidney disease in the community using data from OxRen: a UK population-based cohort study. The British journal of general practice: the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners. 2020;70(693): e285–e293

The Challenge

³. Hirst JA, Hill N, O’Callaghan CA, Lasserson D, McManus RJ, Ogburn E, et al. Prevalence of chronic kidney disease in the community using data from OxRen: a UK population-based cohort study. The British journal of general practice: the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners. 2020;70(693): e285—e293

For July, your challenge isn’t just going to be “drink 8 cups of water per day” because anyone can do that. We’re going to challenge you to bring water into your routine in different ways so that you’re consistently staying on top of your hydration.



Hydration tips & tricks

Water doesn’t have to be boring. Here are some creative ways to increase your water intake and make it more enjoyable:

WEEK 1

MAKING HYDRATION A HABIT

Though it sounds easy, you’d be surprised how often you might forget to drink water. An easy way to do this is to start in the morning. For example, after 6–8 hours of sleep, your body wakes up dehydrated, even if you feel fine. Making drinking water the first thing you do each morning can help lower blood pressure and protect your kidneys.³

- Try a different fruit or herb combination each day. Some examples include lemon and mint, cucumber and basil, strawberry and lime, and so forth – just pick a combination you enjoy.
- Start your day with a glass of infused water before your coffee.
- Prep a big jug and keep it in the fridge so it’s always ready.

*If you're worried about insulin spikes, make sure to use low-sugar frozen fruits such as berries, use more greens than fruit, and use water instead of coconut water.

WEEK 2

INFUSED WATER WEEK

Start simple, but make it exciting. **Infused water** is a great way to hydrate without relying on fizzy drinks or juices. It's refreshing, packed with natural flavour, and quenches your thirst.

- Try a different fruit or herb combination each day. Some examples include lemon and mint, cucumber and basil, strawberry and lime, and so forth – just pick a combination you enjoy.
- Start your day with a glass of infused water before your coffee.
- Prep a big jug and keep it in the fridge so it's always ready.

WEEK 3

ICE POP WEEK

Why not make hydration part of your summer treat? **Frozen fruit pops** aren't just for kids, they can be a fun and delicious way to cool down and hydrate.

- Make your own ice pops using water, coconut water, or water with a sugar-free electrolyte tablet for flavour.
- Add fruit like kiwi, blueberries, or citrus slices before freezing.
- Try freezing your favourite infusion from Week One.

WEEK 4

FOOD WEEK

Eat your way to better hydration. Many fruits and vegetables are over 90% water, meaning you can **snack smart** and stay hydrated.

- Include at least one water-rich food (cucumber, lettuce, rashes, etc.) in every meal or snack.
- Make a hydrating fruit salad with watermelon, cucumber, and strawberries.
- Try a smoothie with leafy greens, frozen fruit, and water or coconut water.*

⁴. Baker LB. Physiology of sweat gland function: The roles of sweating and sweat composition in human health. Temperature (Austin, Tex.). 2019;6(3): 211–259.



Making your water kidney-friendly

When you sweat, you lose not just water but also important electrolytes, such as sodium, potassium, and magnesium. These minerals play a key role in maintaining the delicate fluid and mineral balance your kidneys work hard to regulate.⁴ Replenishing them helps reduce strain on your kidneys, supports proper filtration, and keeps your body functioning at its best.

TO REPLENISH ELECTROLYTES, YOU CAN:

- Add a pinch of salt to your water if you've been sweating a lot.
- Drink coconut water, which is a natural source of electrolytes and can be a great alternative to sugary sports drinks.
- Try adding electrolyte tablets or powders to your water, especially after exercise or long periods in the heat.

Cutting out the sugary drinks

It's tempting to reach for sugary drinks like sodas or iced teas during the summer, but these drinks can actually make you feel more dehydrated. They're often packed with sugar, which your body has to work harder to process, pulling water from your system in the process.



Instead, try to cut down on sugary drinks and replace them with water or herbal teas.

If you're craving a sweet drink, opt for a lightly flavoured sparkling water or infuse your water with fruit for natural sweetness without the added sugar.

Drinking alcohol responsibly in the summer heat



Summer is a time for barbecues, parties, and outdoor gatherings, and it's easy to find yourself reaching for a cold beer or cocktail.

However, it's important to remember that alcohol doesn't just dehydrate you, it can also put added pressure on your kidneys. As a diuretic, alcohol makes your kidneys work harder to remove excess fluids, which can disrupt the delicate balance of electrolytes and increase your risk of dehydration, especially in the heat.

But thankfully, there are ways to enjoy your social occasions while being mindful about how your actions affect your body. If you like a drink from time to time, we want you to make the conscious decision to drink less alcohol, all while enjoying yourself.

ALTERNATE DRINKS

For every alcoholic drink, have a glass of water in between. This helps prevent dehydration and can keep you feeling better throughout the day or night.

TRY NON-ALCOHOLIC ALTERNATIVES

There are now many non-alcoholic beers, wines, and cocktails on the market that taste just as good as the real thing, without the negative effects of alcohol. These options let you enjoy the flavour and social experience without the risk of dehydration.

LIMIT ALCOHOL INTAKE

Wherever possible, try to reduce your alcohol consumption during the summer months. Fewer drinks mean better hydration and less recovery time needed the next day.

Eating for your kidneys

One of the best ways to care for your kidneys is through your plate. Some foods act as natural helpers for your kidney, working to reduce inflammation, remove waste, and support the organs directly. By adding these ingredients into your meals, you’re giving your kidneys the tools they need to thrive

KIDNEY-FRIENDLY FOODS TO FOCUS ON

- BERRIES (ESPECIALLY BLUEBERRIES AND CRANBERRIES)**
Packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds that protect kidney cells and support overall urinary tract health.⁵
- GARLIC**
A natural detoxifier known to reduce inflammation, lower cholesterol, and support kidney function.⁶
- RED BELL PEPPERS**
High in vitamins C and A, these colourful veggies are also low in potassium, making them a kidney-safe addition to your diet.⁷
- CAULIFLOWER**
Contains compounds that help neutralise toxins in your body and is easy to digest, even for those with reduced kidney function.⁸
- FATTY FISH (LIKE SALMON OR MACKEREL)**
These are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help lower blood pressure and inflammation, both of which are factors for kidney disease.⁹

⁵. Miyazaki N, Katsura R, Hamada K, Suzutani T. Blueberry prevents the bladder dysfunction in bladder outlet obstruction rats by attenuating oxidative stress and suppressing bladder remodeling. *Nutrients*. 2020;12 (5): 1285.

⁶. Banerjee SK, Maulik SK. Effect of garlic on cardiovascular disorders: a review. *Nutrition journal*. 2002;1(1): 4.

⁷ A DaVita dietitian’s top 15 healthy foods for people with kidney disease. *Davita.com*. <https://www.davita.com/diet-nutrition/articles/advice/top-15-healthy-foods-for-people-with-kidney-disease> [Accessed 11th June 2025].

⁸. Baralić K, Živanović J, Marić Đ, Božić D, Grahovac L, Antonijević Miljaković E, et al. Sulforaphane-A compound with potential health benefits for disease prevention and treatment: Insights from pharmacological and toxicological experimental studies. *Antioxidants (Basel, Switzerland)*. 2024;13(2).

⁹. Omega-3 fatty acids. *Nih.gov*. <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Omega3FattyAcids-HealthProfessional/> [Accessed 11th June 2025].

