

The Radiant You™

Comprehensive Guide to Hot Water Healing

Why Drink Hot Water? (scroll down for the practical tips if you're in a hurry!)

According to Ayurveda, it is important to remove wastes and impurities from the body on a regular basis. These wastes are called "ama". Ayurveda describes the source of ama as "undigested" or incompletely-digested food. These accumulated molecular wastes disrupt the delicate biochemistry of the body and can block the channels of circulation and communication, contributing to cravings, overeating, inflammation, congestion, aches and pains, and ultimately, disease formation. This process starts with poor digestion, which creates ama, and poor elimination, which allows it to be absorbed into the circulatory system and transported throughout the body.

Hot water flowing through the digestive tract helps to dissolve ama and cleanse the entire digestive and eliminative systems. Research has shown that hot water stays in the digestive tract longer than cold water, moving down into the intestines and promoting better elimination.

Hot water also promotes peristalsis, the downward movement of the GI tract that helps elimination and prevents bloating and abdominal distension. The result is better digestion and assimilation, less gas and bloating, improved elimination and removal and prevention of ama.

Hot water is eventually absorbed into the circulatory system and travels throughout the entire body. The extra warmth and fluid aids in opening circulatory channels, dissolving deeper, accumulated impurities and washing them out of the body.

Many people report that after just a few days of drinking boiled hot water, digestion and elimination improve and they feel lighter, fresher and more vibrant. Many individuals have also experienced improvements in overall health and reduction of symptoms by simply following the hot water recommendation.

How-To:

- Bring 6 cups of pure spring water to a boil (preferably stovetop). Simmer for 5-10 minutes. Pour into a glass-lined or stainless steel thermos (i.e. not plastic.)
- Drink approximately ¼ cup every half hour during the day. Alternatively, leave in a cup warmer on your desk and take a few (3) sips at least every half hour, or more according to thirst.
- You may also drink other pure water during the day, but not cold (should be at least room temperature.)
- If constipation, heartburn, gas or bloating is present, try drinking 2-3 full cups of boiled water (cooled to warm,) on an empty stomach first thing in the morning. Then ideally wait 1 hour before eating (at least 30 minutes) for best effects. (This may be continued indefinitely.)

Why's:

- Pure spring water so that the water is as close to natural as possible. It should at least be purified water.
- Boiling the water makes it “lighter” and more penetrating and cleansing to the body. Technically, boiling it allows some of the minerals and any impurities to separate out. In my experience, actually boiling the water rather than getting it from a hot water dispenser gives much more noticeable benefits.
- Ayurveda describes that water is made of the 2 heaviest elements, water and earth (i.e. minerals.) Boiling it infuses it with air, space and heat—the other three elements—making the water more balancing for all 3 doshas—*airy, fiery and earthy*-- (which together are comprised of the 5 elements.)
- Boiling the water for 10 minutes rather than 5 increases the “lightness” and cleansing effects of the water. If you feel a lot of heaviness, have mucus or allergies, have a coated tongue or are overweight, boiling the water for 10 minutes will give the most results.
- A glass or stainless thermos (for ex. Thermos brand) is recommended to prevent the endocrine-disrupting and other negative effects of plastic, which tends to otherwise leach into the water.
- The amount you drink each time is not as important as the frequency. Drinking it about every ½ hr. will help aid the body in every phase of digestion and metabolism throughout the day.

Rationale:

- The heat promotes downward movement through the stomach and intestines, reducing gas and bloating and promoting good elimination.
- Since digestion consists of chemical reactions that take place best in warm temperatures, drinking warm water rather than cold or iced water leads to better digestion.
- Also, the hot water is absorbed into the circulatory system and travels throughout the body. The extra warmth and fluid aids in dilating circulatory channels, helping to dissolve accumulated impurities and washing them out of the body.
- Water is the universal solvent, and we all know that hot water cleans better than cold (think of washing dishes!). This technique helps the body dissolve and flush out impurities.
- Plain hot water is used to promote internal cleansing and digestive strength for the same reason you rinse your dishes with plain water rather than tea or coffee---it cleans completely and there is no residue.
- In Ayurvedic terms, drinking hot water improves digestion so that ama (a residue of incompletely-digested food) is not formed, and deposits of ama are dissolved and eliminated from the tissues.

Practical Tips:

- Temperature should be as you enjoy drinking tea or coffee—able to be sipped comfortably, not burning hot. But it should also be hotter than water that is just warm and capable of being drunk in large quantities quickly.
- Those on the pitta version of the yoga diet, those prone to heartburn or burning sensations, and anyone uncomfortable with hot liquids, should allow the water to cool to warm before drinking. This will be most effective in their cases.
- Don’t drink the hot water after 6 PM if frequent nighttime urination occurs.
- If you have constipation or hyperacidity, drink an additional 2-3 cups of boiled warm water (not hot) in the morning upon arising. Wait one hour before eating for maximum results. This technique promotes better elimination and helps balance excess stomach acid.

- Better to avoid routinely heating your water in the microwave. The high energy, irregular heating creates excess vata (irregular, high activity) in the water that can disturb your dosha balance.
- When cravings occur after you have just eaten a meal, or any other time during the day, sip a cup of boiled hot water as your first response. This calms vata (your mind and nervous system), and helps your body digest, assimilate and deliver the nutrients to your cells, increasing satisfaction. Usually the craving will disappear within a few minutes.
- Drink warm to hot water with your meals, ideally (room temperature is second choice and try to avoid iced or cold drinks around mealtime.)
- If desired, you may add a squeeze of fresh lemon or lime to your water on occasion, but it is better not to drink it that way all day every day (too much acidic effect.)
- You may also room temperature water as desired to satisfy thirst, while working out, when in hot climate, etc.
- You may continue to drink other warm beverages (coffee, tea, etc.) as desired as well. However this can be a good time to taper your caffeine intake, as drinking the hot water helps elimination and usually mitigates caffeine withdrawal symptoms.
- For best effects, it's better to let your hot water cool a bit before drinking rather than adding cold water to it.
- Alcohol tends to dehydrate the body, and stresses the liver and detox systems. Drinking the hot water will help your detox process, but it's ideal to curtail alcohol intake for best results.