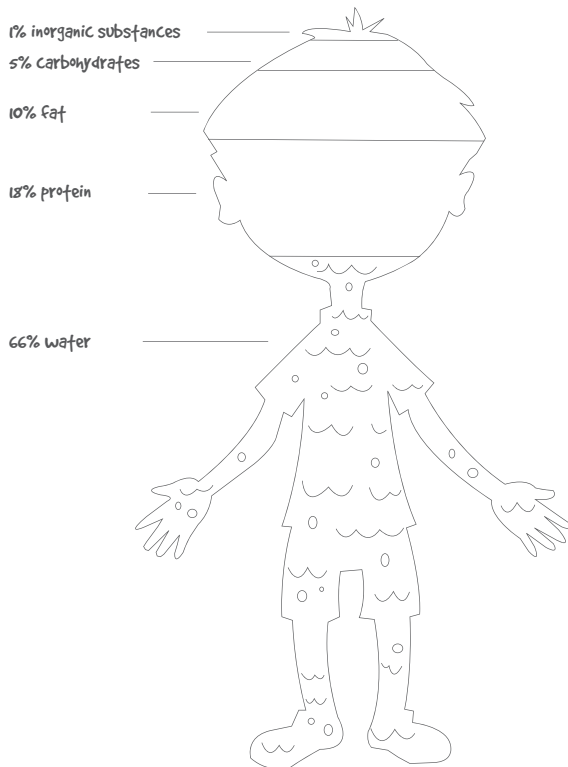


1 Fact sheet

Clean water for health

Why do we need water?

Water is essential to life. People can live for up to two months without food, but will die in less than a week without water.



We need water for the simple reason that so much of our body (about 66 percent) is made up of water, and without water our bodies would not function properly.

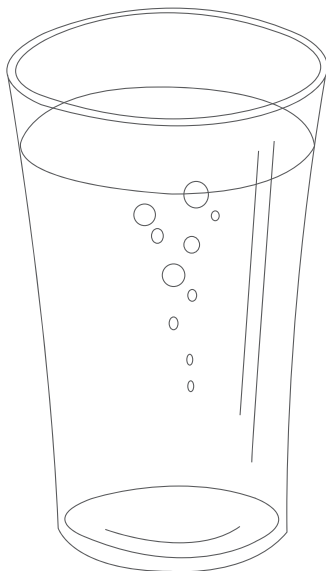
Water in our blood helps deliver food, oxygen and other useful things to our cells to keep us going. Your body has lots of important jobs and it needs water to do them. Some of these jobs include:

- Cleaning the blood as it passes through the kidneys.
- Regulating body temperature – one way it does this is sweating to reduce your temperature.
- Helping to digest foods – your saliva glands extract from your blood the water they need to aid your digestion of foods.
- Helping to remove waste products.
- Providing the means for nutrients to travel to all your organs. Nutrients are simply substances that you need to keep you alive and help you grow.
- Transporting oxygen and nutrients to your cells.



Did you know?

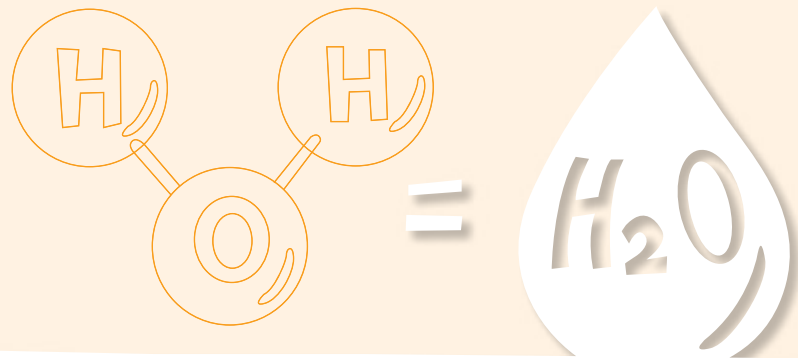
- Each day our kidneys recycle around 180 litres of water.
- Our brains are made up of at least 83% water.
- Our muscles are 77% water.
- Our bones are 33% water!



How much water should we drink?

Well, there's a large amount of water inside us but we are losing it all the time – when we breathe out, sweat and go to the toilet.

To remain properly hydrated, our water intake must equal water output. The amount of water you need to drink varies widely from person to person depending on your size, diet, how active your lifestyle is, and even the weather. Generally we need to drink around two litres of water every day to stay healthy. That's about 6 to 8 glasses of water each day. And if you're playing sport or if it's hot you need to drink a few more glasses of water. So stay topped up!



There are a number of benefits to drinking water:

- **Keeps you energetic and alert**

Yes, it helps improve your concentration and learning in class! It boosts your energy levels which helps you perform better at exercise and sports. You lose 5-10 cups of fluid a day through sweating, breathing out and going to the toilet. And if you become dehydrated you can get headaches, lose energy and be in a bad mood.

- **Assists you in getting well sooner**

Remember that horrible cold or flu you had in the past? Have you ever heard the expression 'drink plenty of fluids' when you're sick? It's true. Water can help control a fever and it replaces lost fluids, helping you get better faster. It also assists in flushing the nasties (the 'toxins'/impurities which are causing all the problems!) from your body.

- **You have more fun playing or exercising**

Water helps protect your joints and muscles. Drinking water before, during and after exercise can also help reduce muscle cramping and tiredness.

- **Keeps your skin looking healthy**

Drinking water moisturizes your skin from the inside out. Water helps keep your skin supple and helps prevent dryness.

- **Assists in controlling your weight**

Water helps your body digest food and gives you the energy you need for exercise. And sometimes we mistake thirst for hunger pangs and nibble on snacks when the body actually needs water. By drinking water you fill up and your hunger pangs diminish.

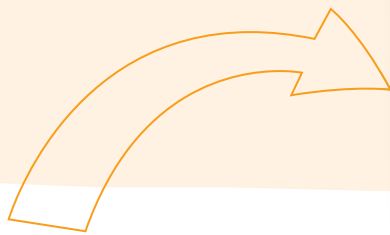
- **Looks after your teeth**

Water is better for your teeth than drinks with sugar in them – which means fewer trips to the dentist!

So now you know why WATER is essential for your good health!

Getting water

Now let's imagine a world without taps or bottled water. Where would you get your water? How would you know it was safe to drink?



The **quality** of the water you drink is just as important as staying properly hydrated. Drinking dirty or contaminated water is dangerous to our health. Contaminated water may contain water-borne diseases or pollutants that can make people very sick, or even die.

Water-borne diseases are caused by tiny micro-organisms which get into the water and live there. They are so small you need a powerful microscope to see them, but many are deadly.

In New Zealand we're lucky to have access to clean drinking water by simply turning on our taps. By law, water companies (like Watercare and Metrowater) must provide high quality tap water that is safe for people to drink and use.

The quality of Auckland's tap water is checked and monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure it is always clean and safe.

But it's not like this everywhere. Even today, in some countries around the world it is not very easy to get drinking water. Many people spend most of their day searching for it.

So this World Water Day, we reaffirm that clean water is life! We need to drink water to live, and our health depends on the quality of our water. Clean water is essential for a healthy world.



WaterAid/ Eva-Lotta Jansson

Over 1 billion people around the world – one sixth of the world's population – do not have access to clean drinking water. These people drink dirty or contaminated water because they often have no other choice.



WaterAid/ Caroline Irby

Did you know?

- Women and girls in Africa spend 40 billion hours each year finding and carrying water back to their families. They walk for an average of 8 kilometres to get their water – that's about 19 laps around a rugby field! – and carry buckets as heavy as 20 kilograms (about the same as a fully packed suitcase).
- 1.8 million children die from water-borne diseases every year. That's 6,000 children dying each day, or one child every 15 seconds.
- 50% of the world's hospital beds are occupied by people with water-borne diseases.

Facts sourced from Blue Planet Run