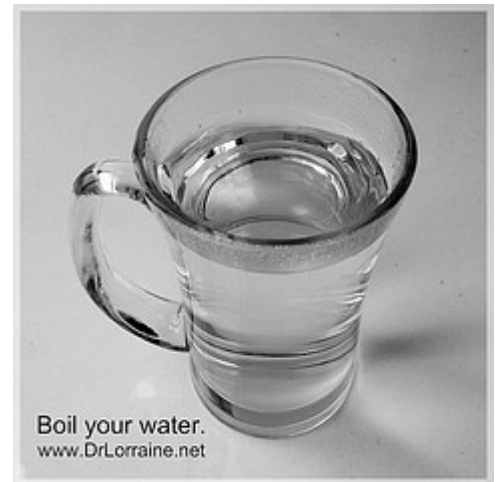


Sip warm water when you eat

When you sit down in an Asian restaurant in Japan, Hong Kong, Macau, or Singapore, you're likely to be greeted with a short cup of warm water. This typically comes as a surprise to Western tourists who expect cold water. It turns out these Asian longevity hot spots are hot in more ways than one.



When you're seated at a Western restaurant, you're typically served a (sometimes very tall) glass of ice water that cools your hands and insides. Drinking ice water causes the blood vessels near your stomach to constrict and solidifies the fats you're eating, possibly making it more difficult for your body to disperse unwanted fats.

Some experts say cold water interferes with the gastrointestinal tract's ability to properly digest food and retrieve the vitamins and minerals your body needs, and may therefore result in indigestion.

Traditional Chinese doctors advise against gulping too much water with meals. It dilutes your digestive "fire." They suggest sipping warm water which helps with digestion.

Drinking warm water before breakfast is especially beneficial. Add a squeeze of fresh lemon to help to flush your kidneys and bowels. Dr. Robert with Acupuncture Associates drinks warm

water and lemon with every meal. You use hot or warm water to wash your dishes. Doesn't it make sense to cleanse and rinse your own body with warm water as well?

Another advantage of asking for hot water in restaurants is that it may be safer than cold water at the same establishment. Boiling kills bacterial organisms in the water, thereby reducing your chance of taking in any viruses or fungi that can infect your body. See this USA Today article for tips on purifying water.

Ice machines and portable water dispensers can accumulate bacteria and mold if they aren't cleaned well on a regular basis. This City of Houston Health and Human Services article describes some of the risks of consuming mold that can grow in ice machines and on bar guns and soda nozzles.

If you like cold water, drink it between meals. It can help to cool you down on a hot day, or bring your body temperature back to normal after exercise. Some say cold water burns a few extra calories and may even temporarily raise your metabolism, but it may not be the best thing for your body in the long run.

When you're at home, you can prepare water any way you want. But even when you go to restaurants, you can be specific about the type of water you want. Ask them to hold the ice, or bring a cup of hot water, for example. It's okay if it makes you sweat a little. That's another important way your body eliminates toxins.

Drink distilled water daily to detox and defend your body

Regardless of the temperature, water is one of the most essential elements of sustaining life and maintaining good health. It's necessary to purify your blood and eliminate toxins that build up in your body.

Test it out for yourself. Drink iced or cold water with all your meals for a month. And then sip warm or hot water with all your meals the following month. Find out what temperature feels best for you. Your body type, lifestyle, diet, local climate, and even your beliefs affect your results. Trust your own gut feeling.