

Fluid Intake Guidelines for Kidney Stone Formers

Why do I have to drink so much fluid?

Nearly one in seven Americans will suffer from urinary stone disease during their lifetime. Further, over half will develop at least one recurrence. As such, urinary stone disease represents a chronic disease. Non-medical and non-surgical management is a mainstay of treatment for many patients with urinary stone disease. This involves manipulating urinary constituents with a goal of decreasing stone promoting risk factors and increasing protective factors. One of the most important preventive measures is high fluid intake. Therefore, we recommend that you drink enough fluid to produce 2 to 2.5 liters of urine daily.

How do I know when I am drinking enough fluid?

In general, if your urine is only light yellow or clear, then you are drinking enough fluid. Also, there is a free iPhone app that can help you keep track of your fluid intake for the day (search “kidney stone app” at the Apple store). In the app, you can choose the fluid goal (say 3 liters or 100 ounces) and set the goal for yourself on the last page of the app. You can choose the units (milliliters, ounces, pints, etc.). Then you just click on the picture of the drink that you consume.

The specific fluid that you ingest is important, as well. Cranberry juice has been found to increase the risk of calcium oxalate and uric acid stones. Lemonade has long been considered to have stone preventing properties. Plain water is least expensive and very effective!

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