



This week...

Take a Break and Hydrate!

Did you know that your brain is made up of 80% water? Every system in your body is dependent on water to function, particularly your brain. Our brains depend on proper hydration to function optimally. When we lose too much water, our brain cells lose energy and efficiency.

When dehydrated, we have more **difficulty keeping our attention focused**. Dehydration impairs short-term memory function and long-term memory recall. It also causes symptoms to occur, such as brain fog, exhaustion, sleep issues, stress, anger, and depression.

Research also tells us that prolonged dehydration causes grey matter to shrink in both size and mass, which can cause the brain to age prematurely and put you at risk for dementia and Alzheimer's.

Signs you may not be consuming enough water:

- Feeling fatigued and lethargic
- Experiencing hunger pangs
- Dry mouth, skin, and eyes
- Feeling overly thirsty
- Your urine is more concentrated or darker than usual
- Feeling disoriented
- Experiencing headaches

Drinking water improves brain health by simply **increasing the blood flow and oxygen to the brain**. Since your brain is mostly water, drinking water helps you in a number of ways, including:

- Improving concentration and cognition
- Helping to balance your mood and emotions
- Maintaining memory function
- Preventing and relieving headaches
- Reducing stress

Drinking more water is usually as easy as remembering! Does drinking eight glasses of water today sound like a lot? Just break it down: 2 glasses by 10am, 2 more by lunch, 2 more by 3pm, and 2 more before bed!

10 tips to increase your H₂O intake:

1. Make water more enjoyable – try sparkling water or add slices of lemon, orange or cucumber, and/or herbs such as basil or mint. For more ideas, check out this link: [27 Fruit-Infused Waters to Stay Hydrated This Season](#)
2. Drink a glass after every bathroom break.
3. Sip while prepping a meal, snack, or waiting for your coffee to brew!
4. Use an app to remind you, and track how many cups or litres you've drank.
5. Dilute sweet drinks (like iced tea, fruit juice or lemonade) with water and ice.
6. Keep a jug or water bottle nearby at your main locations (on your desk, in your car, at your bedside, near the TV)
7. Drain a glass, fill a glass. Do it right away!
8. Explore different herbal teas.
9. Double up during workouts: one bottle during and one bottle after.
10. Get some cool, reusable straws – you will drink faster, and hopefully more!

If you would like to contribute, or have ideas about what you would like to see in the [ReFresh](#) series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.

Sources:

1. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/you-illuminated/201010/why-your-brain-needs-water>
2. <https://brainmd.com/blog/6-amazing-health-benefits-of-drinking-water/>
3. <https://womensbrainhealth.org/brain-buzz/staying-hydrated-boosts-brain-power>
4. <https://www.self.com/story/how-to-drink-more-water>