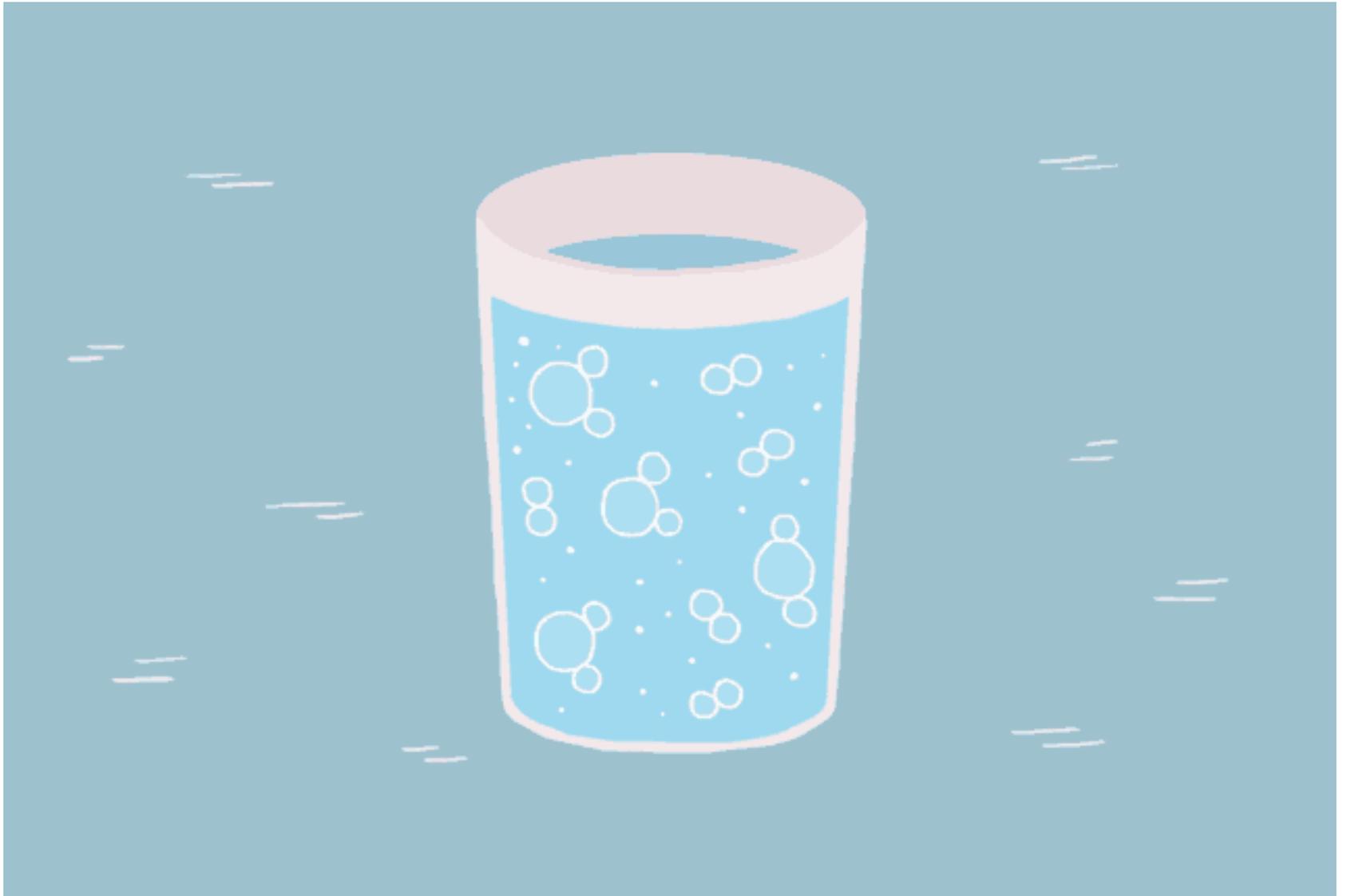


Why Some Doctors Are Calling Hydrogen Water The Next “Miracle” Drink

Here's what you should know

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If you ever took chemistry, you know that water is two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen (hence H₂O). In recent years, wellness gurus have been taking the most basic and essential of beverages and adding supplementary benefits, with the likes of aloe, rose, and alkaline water on the rise. Now, a new trend in the States—although one that's been in Japan for several decades—is looking to amp up the health factor of water, the compound that makes up the majority of your body—not to mention the planet. Almost ironically, it's with the most simple of molecules: hydrogen.

You're probably thinking, *If water has hydrogen in it already, how can*

you add more hydrogen without making it something else? I was too, so I reached out to Dr. Nicholas Perricone, a dermatologist, nutritionist, and owner of his own namesake cosmetics and skin-care line, as well as the latest distributor of hydrogen water. Dr. Perricone explained that molecular hydrogen (or H₂, as hydrogen cannot exist alone as a molecule and must bond with another) plus water does not equal plain water. “Think about it as if you were stirring sugar or salt into a glass of water—it dissolves, but it changes the makeup of the water, right?” Right.

Dr. Perricone Hydrogen Water, which was first introduced earlier this year in [*Women’s Wear Daily*](#), is an “energy and recovery” beverage that the cosmeceutical guru and Yale-affiliated doctor swears offers a litany of health and beauty benefits when consumed several times per day.

The main benefit, according to Dr. Perricone, is that it’s anti-inflammatory—which can aid with many different internal and external conditions—as inflammation can be chronic, low-grade, and under the radar, as well as acute and obvious (like, a sunburn). But Perricone believes it’s the chronic undetected kind that leads to a slew of health conditions ranging from heart disease to Alzheimer’s. And it’s not like this is the doctor’s first foray into the anti-inflammatory world, rather, he’s spent much of his career studying diets, supplements, and skin-care products designed to ward off and prevent the damage that inflammation can cause.

But Dr. Perricone believes that hydrogenated water, what he calls “an affordable additive,” could have sweeping effects if everyone was drinking the stuff. In fact, he told *WWD* that he “truly believe[s] if we can get this into our country, we can really dramatically reduce the health-care costs.”

Lofty claim, but Perricone isn’t the first to enter the states with hydrogen water. Just last year, another company, H-Factor, began selling pouches (as opposed to cans, like Perricone’s formulation) of hydrogen water, along with a similar litany of claims, as well as *some* science to back it up. Both brands had something over any previous iterations of hydrogen-infused beverage, creating the water without any chemical processes.

What's more, H-Factor cites more than 500 international studies documented in various science and medical journals that report how and whether molecular hydrogen, H₂, may offer increased energy and alertness, [anti-inflammatory](#) benefits, relief from fatigue, and [improved circulation](#), along with [increased athletic performance](#) and a [boost in recovery](#), too. Sounds like a miracle beverage, right?

Experts like Dr. Perricone swear by it. He told me he has one “ice-cold can first thing in the morning to help reduce brain fog,” one during his meditation session later in the morning, and one for the inevitable afternoon slump, both with the intended effect of boosting focus and concentration, amongst its many claims.

Some who look at the research, though, aren't so sure hydrogen water is the miracle beverage that's going to save the world—or anyone, at least anytime soon. Dr. Nitin Kumar, a Boston-based, Harvard-trained physician, looked at the aforementioned research and said that “the water is unlikely to cure diseases.” However, Dr. Kumar noted that molecular hydrogen, as seen in the studies, “does appear to be an effective mechanism to counteract reactive oxygen molecules that are thought, in some cases, to be associated with oxidative damage and perhaps therefore aging, disease, and cancer.”

An important caveat of Dr. Kumar's, though, was that the ideal way to get H₂ into the bloodstream—and therefore into the necessary tissues—would be to inhale it, rather than throw back a pouch or can of it. The only study that cited guzzling hydrogen water's efficacy was done on rats, which, as you might imagine, have slightly different bodies than human beings do. Therefore, we would want to see more data about the blood and tissue concentrations of H₂ and the reactive oxygen species in humans before making any final determinations. The amount of molecular hydrogen a human needs per day is hard to tell, as well, Dr. Kumar says, until more research is done. Specifically, he'd want to know “how much you'd have to drink to get the right amount of H₂ into your blood, how much H₂ you'd need in your blood to get the right amount of H₂ into your tissue, how

much H₂ you'd need in your tissue to reduce damaging oxidative compounds, and how much oxidative compound reduction you'd need to see a reduction in aging, cancer, or the endpoint of interest.”

Bottom line? At \$3 per 8.3 oz can of [Dr. Perricone's Hydrogen Water](#) or \$3 for an 11 oz. pouch of [H-Factor Hydrogen Water](#), more studies are needed to determine just how effective it is to be worth the price tag. But the good news is, it definitely can't hurt you. And anecdotally, after I made my family drink it over a long weekend, some of us felt that our digestion had improved and that we had increased clarity. But don't take my word for it—try it for yourself. If nothing else, you're hydrating, which is definitely a good thing.