

It's Cold Outside, Warm Soup or Ice Cubes ... You Decide

It's February, how about going outside naked and jumping into an ice-cold lake or river? Almost instantly your skin would turn white as capillaries contract to divert blood away from the surface to send it deeper to keep vital organs warm. Quickly, your muscles would lose their flexibility and ability to function properly. Obviously this would be really silly to do immediately before exercise or activity without warming up first.

Equally silly however, is when nearly all restaurants will serve ice-water prior to your meal. Combining ice-cold liquids with food is one of the worst things you can do for digestion.

Consuming it will do the same things to the muscles lining your stomach as jumping naked into an ice-cold lake does to the surface muscles of your body. Capillaries will contract and stomach muscle function will be impaired. When eating you want your stomach to be warmed up and flexible, just like how before exercising you want biceps and hamstrings "warmed up." The innermost stomach muscles, the inner obliques, aid in digestion by massaging food together with digestive juices. The lower, narrower portion of the stomach, the pylorus, also uses muscular action (peristalsis) to send food into the small intestine.

Drinking ice-cold beverages with your meal also causes fats to congeal and often prevents appropriate amounts of stomach acids and enzymes from being released. Your stomach is not just a big bag at the bottom of your esophagus. It's a hardworking organ that needs between 40 minutes to a few hours, depending on the types of food consumed, to complete its critical work.

Daily, year-round drinking of ice-water wasn't even feasible until about 80 years ago. It's a modern invention that is detrimental to our health. I know several people who have actually "cured" their acid reflux simply by giving up ice-cold drinks with meals.



Warm soups can improve digestion

So how should our meals begin? Evidence of the existence of soups goes back 20,000 years. The word restaurant derives from the French verb restaurer, meaning to restore. It was first used in the 16th century referring to street vendors who sold highly concentrated, thick, inexpensive soups (probably mineral and collagen-rich bone broths). The soups were promoted as an antidote to physical exhaustion.

Worldwide, soups have been the traditional way to begin meals for centuries. In Japan miso soup is a daily staple and it's important to recognize that miso is much more than a flavoring. It provides restorative qualities from the digestive enzymes, probiotics, and protein delivered by the fermented soy bean paste. A classic Russian lunch will include hot soup as the first course year-round. Even in warm-weather Latin-American countries black-bean, chicken and rice, and hot fish soups are dietary mainstays. Relaxing and warming the stomach rather than freezing it, has been the traditional start to most meals for thousands of years.



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Before modern refrigeration, traditional warm-weather "chilled" soups were not actually chilled but served at, or slightly below, room temperature – nowhere near the temperature of ice-water. It would be extremely likely that the base of virtually all of these traditional soups was a stock made from boiling down root vegetables, herbs and animal bones. It's the content of the bones including collagen (a source of joint restoring glucosamine and chondroitin), the anti-inflammatory amino acids proline and glycine, and minerals that are the source of its health benefits. Extracting the nutrients from bones is accomplished through long time cooking (simmering for 12-24 hours or 8-10 hours in a pressure cooker) and by adding some acid to the pot, like vinegar, lemon juice, wine or a bit of tomato paste, which loosens and dissolves all the constituents.

The famous 12th century physician and biblical scholar, Maimonides wrote that chicken soup "is recommended as an excellent food as well as medication." Today, **the Drugs.com website amazingly recommends chicken soup for its medicinal qualities.** Traditional chicken soup will start by boiling the carcass all day or overnight.

Beginning your meal with ice-water has been made possible by modern refrigeration but is a major step down in preparing us for smooth digestion and nutrient assimilation.

I usually begin a meal with warm soup or a little room temperature water with freshly squeezed lemon. I know it's rare, but **get excited when you go to a restaurant that routinely serves its water without ice.** It's a sign they understand how mealtime should be respected. Otherwise ask for your water straight-up, with a wedge of lemon, hold the ice.



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**Toxic Exposures Are Causing A Significant
Increase In Serious Health Challenges**

Parkinson's disease has more than doubled since 1990 and is expected to double again in the next 15 years. It is the fastest growing neurological disorder, far outpacing Alzheimer's. **A groundbreaking study released in 2025** showed that people living 1-3 miles from golf courses had more than double the risk of being diagnosed with it. Researchers have concluded that toxic exposure to pesticides both airborne and in the ground water are the likely causes. While there is probably a genetic predisposition, the latest research has shown that **Parkinson's is often triggered by toxic exposures**. Some studies show that progression may be slowed by adopting detox protocols.

Other recent studies have linked many other degenerative diseases and chronic afflictions to exposure to environmental toxins. A partial list includes various cancers, respiratory illnesses (COPD, asthma, fibrosis), neurological disorders (Parkinson's, nerve damage, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders), organ damage (liver, kidney), reproductive complications (infertility, birth defects), and autoimmune conditions, affecting nearly every system in the body can be caused by concentrated contact or long-term environmental exposures. Common toxic sources include: pharmaceuticals (including vaccines), toxic chemicals in hair dyes, paints, new carpet, cleaning supplies, artificial sweeteners, preservatives and myriad other toxins in our food supply.

What to do? First, carefully scrutinize everything you willingly ingest or use topically. Choosing organic foods, body care, and laundry and cleaning supplies goes a long way towards reducing toxic exposures. Remember many toxins are inhaled or pass thru the skin. Next significantly reduce or eliminate anything that carries a warning label. Third support your body's elimination and detoxification pathways. The liver is our body's largest internal organ and performs 500 critical functions but none may be more important in today's industrialized world than detoxification. Vital Planet introduced a new formula last month called:



Vital Liver Pure is a 2-part, 14-day, round-the-clock liver cleanse system featuring time-tested herbs and premium nutraceuticals formulated to increase bile flow and facilitate detoxification. This formula is gentle and contains no bowel stimulants so

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