

Why do I need to pee more in the cold?

June 2 2022, by Christian Moro and Charlotte Phelps



Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

You're taking a stroll through the park on a cold winter's morning, when it hits you—the need to find a bathroom, and quick! This didn't used to happen in summer.

Is there something about [winter](#) that makes us need to pee more?

We study the bladder and [lower urinary tract](#). Here are two main

explanations for what's going on.

1. Our lifestyle changes

In summer, we tend to be outside and more active. We sweat more (to lose heat) and it's easy to become dehydrated if we don't drink enough water.

This impacts the amount of free fluid our body is willing to [excrete](#), and our [urine](#) volume is often reduced because of this.

In winter, we're often indoors, around [water sources](#), so we are more likely to be hydrated, less active, and to sweat less. As such, we tend to have more free fluid to excrete via our urine.

2. Our body wants to avoid losing too much heat

If we become cold very quickly, the body protects our [internal organs](#) in a number of ways.

One is "[cold-induced diuresis](#)", or an increase in urine excretion in response to the [cold](#).

Initially, blood is diverted away from the skin to avoid losing its heat to the outside air. This means more blood ends up flushing through your internal organs.

In particular, blood rushes to your kidneys in a greater volume and at a higher pressure. This increases the amount the kidneys need to [filter](#). As a result, your rate of [urine excretion](#) increases.

What should I do?

Our diet, age, blood pressure, and personal situation can all impact how much we urinate.

Producing more urine can also be a sign of [hypothermia](#). This is your body responding to the cold as a stressor, so act quickly. Find somewhere away from the cold, and slowly warm up your body.

If the increased urine is also accompanied by [other symptoms](#), such as extensive shivering, breathing difficulties, or confusion, seek [medical attention](#) immediately.

Keep up the fluids in winter too

If you're out in the cold, you may not feel thirsty. Nonetheless, be sure to drink plenty of fluids during the day. Although it may be tempting to avoid drinking so you don't need to keep rushing to the bathroom, this can lead to dehydration.

If you're often out in the cold in light gear, and you find this increases your urinary output, there can be impacts over the long term.

Frequent urination can be [detrimental](#) to your body's natural salt balance (particularly sodium and [potassium](#)). So be sure to maintain a [healthy diet](#).

It does seem like a bit of a balancing game. The key, however, is to avoid stressing your body this way when it's cold. To do this, be sure to dress appropriately and keep warm.

What if you don't notice a difference?

Although the body has mechanisms to make you [urinate more](#) in the

cold, not everyone notices peeing more in winter.

If you keep warm, there's no reason to think your body would often be "shocked" into responding to [cold temperatures](#).

In fact, when tracked in research studies, it has been common for researchers to record no difference in [urinary output](#) between the [seasons](#).

What about the urine?

It's not just the volume of urine that might be different in winter. The composition can change too.

The body excretes a higher amount of [calcium](#) in the urine during [winter](#).

This is more likely due to lifestyle during cold seasons rather than anything internal. We tend to be [less active](#) in winter, gain [extra weight](#), and eat more salty, preserved and processed foods.

This means there can be a higher risk of developing [kidney stones](#) during winter for people who are susceptible.

So as the weather cools down, be sure to maintain a [healthy lifestyle](#), stay warm, and don't forget to stay hydrated, even when it's cold.

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by The Conversation

Citation: Why do I need to pee more in the cold? (2022, June 2) retrieved 5 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-06-pee-cold.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.