

Is Drinking Urine Safe When You're Dehydrated?

Let's say you get stranded in the wilderness, and your environment lacks the resources that make your survival easier, especially water.

What would you do to survive?

The coming drought
is so big



In most cases, people will do whatever it is necessary to return back to civilization, and some will even drink their own urine to quench their thirst. How did this myth get embedded in our consciousness? And most importantly, is it right to pursue it?

A lot of people believe that drinking their own pee is the correct thing to do in a survival situation, and they strongly believe that their salvation lies in the yellow drink. However, remember that just because it's yellow, it doesn't make it lemonade.

I know quite a few survival experts that are organizing survival courses and are involved in the survival and emergency preparedness fields. They all told me that every time they organize a wilderness field course, there's at least one or two people that ask about the drinking urine polemic.

They all struggle to fight this survival myth, and it seems to be a never-ending fight.

How did the drinking urine myth start?



This myth started decades ago, and it was often found in survival books and movies, but it was only in the recent ten years or so, that it gained huge popularity. As people started to consume more and more survival TV shows, a certain celebrity in this field, exploited the myth and made it a shockingly attractive way to quench his thirst.

The main purpose was to gain a large audience, and soon enough, it made him the center of attention. Even more, due to its increased coverage, a lot of rookie survivalists started to believe that drinking urine is more than ok as a last resort.

The reality

When looking into this survival myth, the average Joe should

first try to understand how much he or she can live without water. If you have adequate shelter to protect you from the elements, you can live for three days without water and even stretch it to four days.

It may be true that some of the lucky survivalists you hear about in the media managed to stretch this timeline with a day or two by drinking their own pee. However, this is not a good practice, and most certainly, it won't work for everyone.

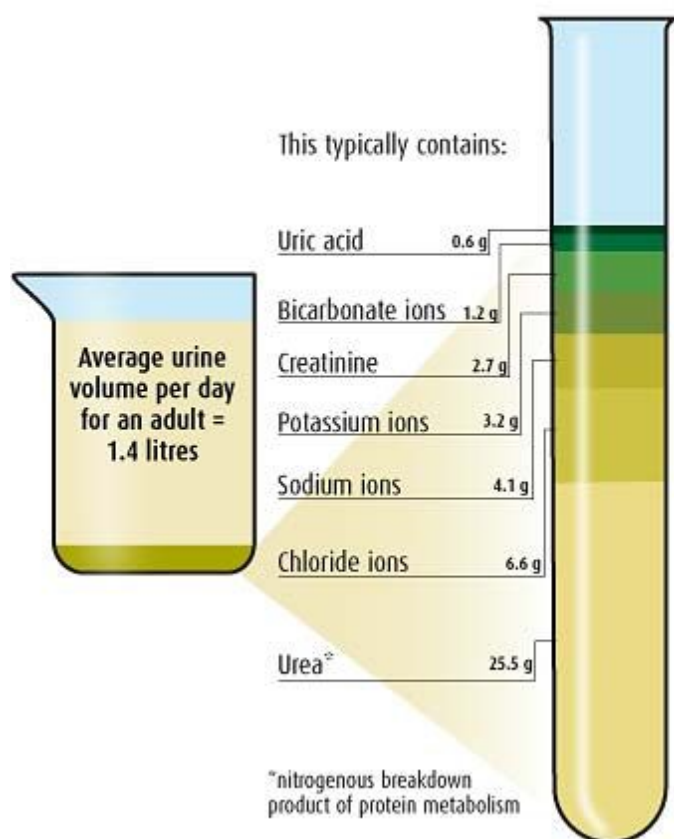
Let's say that you are in good shape, you hydrate properly every day, and you have a well-balanced diet. You can be the picture of health, but your urine is still laden with waste compounds. By now, adults should have learned that no urine is sterile and that one of the main reasons your body is eliminating it is to get rid of toxins and bacteria from within your body. Your urine contains more than 2,000 compounds, and around 100 of those are bacteria. The other compounds are waste from bodily processes.

This means that most of the chemicals that can be found in the urine of an adult comes from their diet, the environment they live in, the medicines they take, and even the cosmetics they use. Since your body is unable to recycle these compounds, it is trying to eliminate them through urine.

To make things worse, when your body approaches a hydration deficit, drinking your own urine will only aggravate things since there will be a much higher bacteria concentration in your urine than usual.

Why do people believe that drinking urine is ok?

WATCH YOUR Ps



Mostly, because we learned in school that urine is around 95% water and 5% waste. That high content of water found in urine makes people believe that drinking urine is safe since 5% of waste, doesn't seem that important or dangerous.

However, as one gets dehydrated, those numbers will change dramatically by the hour. Science tells us that drinking urine when being dehydrated can create side effects such as diarrhea, vomiting, and electrolyte imbalance. There are also some other side effects that can make you ill, but those three alone will leave you even more dehydrated.

In the U.S. Army field guide, you can find a section regarding dehydration and what liquids you should avoid drinking when water is in short supply. You will find urine, right next to ocean water and blood. It is even specified that if you get injured, your urine will contain even more dangerous compounds than the one of an unharmed survivor.

What is the alternative?

When being stranded in the wilderness, there are a couple of ways to stay hydrated, and your pee should be used otherwise. It may not be a great choice as a beverage, but that doesn't make it useless.

The desert may be the only environment where water sources can't be found. Even so, only the driest deserts will leave you with no alternatives. Otherwise, numerous plants contain water that you could extract or tap during various seasons. Your main concern here is to be able to correctly identify the plants you plan on using and determine during which season they provide water.

Another alternative that you can successfully implement is sap collection. For example, in February and March, you can collect maple sap, if you drill a hole in the right tree. That water is perfectly fine to drink since it has already been filtered by the wood tissue of the tree. Even more, it has a pleasant taste with a sugary flavor.

The only way to obtain drinkable water from your urine is to make a solar still. Making one is not complicated, and this subject is often brought up when desert survival is the main topic.

Use your pee for other survival needs

Use your pee to start a fire when no other fire-making tools are available. A water bottle filled with urine (use clear pee, not too dark) will act as a lens of sorts. The trick here is to hold the bottle upside down, thus allowing the sun-rays to pass through its convex top. By doing so, you'll be able to focus the sun-rays onto tinder or a piece of paper. If you are patient enough and you're lucky to benefit from a sunny day,

sooner or later, you'll admire your smoldering ambers.

Even more, stale urine has been used since ancient times for a wide range of purposes. When the urine breaks down for a couple of days, it will have a high concentration of ammonia. The Ancient Romans used stale urine to whiten their teeth, and later people used it to tan animal skins and even dye their clothing. It is also known that the first pioneers used urine to fertilize their crops or manufacture gunpowder.

Concluding

Drinking urine is not recommended during a survival scenario where you lack water. Such practice can do you more harm than good, and you should avoid perpetuating this survival myth. Not only will it make you ill, but you will also not get the hydration you need.

Even so, just because you can't drink urine, it doesn't mean it's worthless. There are many uses for it, and urine has been used successfully for centuries during survival scenarios.



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