



Water   
**Retention**

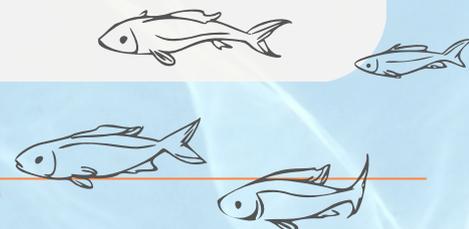


**Auto-Reduce Blueprint**

by  Fitelo

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# Quick Results Checklist

## **(Do these for 72 hours)**

- No packaged food + no restaurant food (biggest win).
- Protein at every meal (paneer/eggs/dal/chicken/fish).
- 2-4 potassium foods/day (Dahi, coconut water, dal, greens, banana).
- 8,000-10,000 steps/day + 10 min walk after dinner.
- Sleep 7-8 hours; stop screens 45 min before bed.

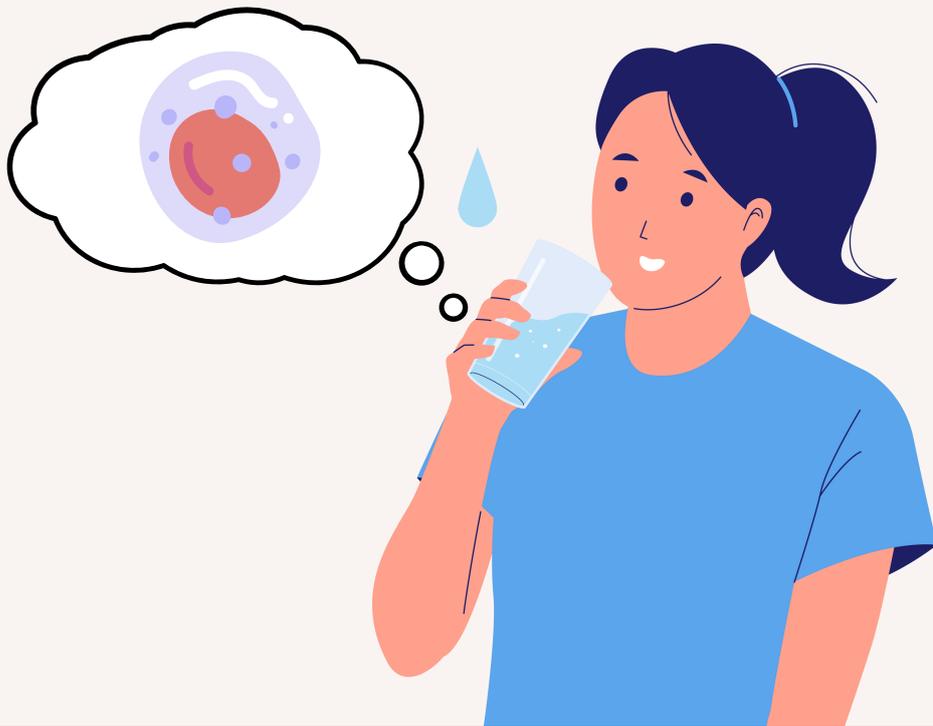
### **BEFORE YOU START:**

Who this is for: people who feel puffy (face, belly, hands, legs), see sudden scale jumps, or bloat after salty meals, travel, stress, or poor sleep. What you get: the science of why water retention happens + food lists + herbs (including hibiscus) + a 3-day reset + daily routines. Important: If swelling is one-sided, sudden, painful, or with breathlessness, do not self-treat only - see a clinician (red flags inside).



# What is Water Retention?

Water retention (also called fluid retention or edema) means your body is temporarily holding extra water in the spaces between cells or inside tissues. It can show up as a puffy face, tight rings, swollen feet/ankles, belly bloating, or a sudden 1-3 kg jump on the scale. Most water retention is not fat gain - it is usually a short-term response to salt, carbs, hormones, inflammation, sleep/stress, heat, travel, or dehydration.



## THE BIG IDEA

Think of your weight like this: fat changes are slow (days to weeks), but water changes are fast (hours to days). If the scale jumped overnight, it is almost always water and gut content.

# Why water retention happens

Your body holds water mainly to protect blood volume and maintain electrolyte balance (sodium, potassium, magnesium).

Common triggers:

- High sodium: packaged snacks, restaurant gravies, pickles, papad, sauces. Sodium pulls water.
- High carbs after low carbs: glycogen storage binds water; a higher-carb day can add 1-2 kg water temporarily.
- Poor sleep + stress: higher cortisol increases fluid holding and cravings for salty foods.
- Dehydration: when you drink less, the body holds water as a survival signal.
- Inflammation: new workouts, injury, alcohol, very high sugar, or gut irritation.
- Hormones: menstrual cycle changes can cause predictable water retention.
- Long sitting/standing: blood pooling in legs; travel and desk work worsen ankle swelling.
- Medications: some BP meds (like amlodipine), NSAIDs (ibuprofen), steroids, some hormones can increase retention (ask your doctor).
- Heat: summer + high humidity increases fluid shifting to the skin and legs.

# Quick self-check

## ***(To understand your pattern)***

- Morning puffiness (face/eyes): often salt, poor sleep, alcohol, late dinner, or thyroid.
- Evening ankle swelling: often sitting/standing, travel, circulation/venous issues.
- Pitting test: press shin/ankle for 5 seconds. If a dent remains, it is pitting edema (needs attention if persistent).
- One-sided swelling: more concerning than both sides - especially with pain/warmth/redness.



## **SAFETY FIRST**

Red flags - seek urgent help: one-leg swelling with pain/warmth/redness, breathlessness or chest pain, very low urine output, swelling that worsens rapidly, or new severe swelling in pregnancy.

# The Auto-Reduce Blueprint:

## (7 levers that work)

If you control these 7 levers, water retention usually settles within 48-72 hours (unless there is a medical cause).

LEVER	WHAT TO DO (SIMPLE)	WHY IT WORKS
<b>Sodium</b>	Home-cooked, minimal sauces/pickles/papad; avoid packaged + restaurant for 3 days.	Less sodium = less water pull into tissues.
<b>Potassium</b>	Add 2-4 potassium foods/day (dahi, dal, greens, coconut water, banana).	Balances sodium and supports kidney excretion.
<b>Protein</b>	Protein with every meal (paneer/eggs/dal/chicken/fish).	Low protein can worsen swelling; protein stabilizes blood volume.
<b>Magnesium</b>	Nuts/seeds + greens; consider doctor-guided supplement if needed.	Helps relaxation, blood pressure balance, and reduces stress puffiness.
<b>Water timing</b>	2-3 L/day spread out; less water 2 hours before bed.	Prevents dehydration-triggered retention and improves urine flow.
<b>Movement</b>	8,000-10,000 steps + ankle pumps + legs up 10-15 min if needed.	Moves lymph and prevents pooling in legs.
<b>Sleep + stress</b>	7-8 hours; 10 min breathing daily; stop late-night scrolling	Lower cortisol reduces fluid holding and cravings.

## The 80/20 rule

Fast rule: If you want quick de-puffing, remove restaurant + packaged food first. Most people notice visible changes in the face and belly within 2-3 days.

# The Auto-Reduce Blueprint:

Use this section like a shopping list. Pick 1-2 items from each category daily.

## 1) Potassium-rich foods (balance sodium)

Pick 2-4 daily:

- **Coconut water:** 200-300 ml (plain).
- **Dahi / curd:** 1 bowl; chaas 250-400 ml with roasted jeera.
- **Banana:** 1 small OR orange/mausambi 1 medium OR guava 1 medium.
- **Greens:** Palak, methi, bathua, sarson (1-2 bowls cooked).
- **Vegetables:** Tomato, cucumber, capsicum, beetroot, pumpkin, lauki, tori.
- **Carb choices:** Sweet potato (100-150 g), pumpkin (1 bowl).
- **Legumes:** Moong/masoor/arhar dal, rajma, chole (1 bowl cooked).
- **Indian add-ons:** Nimbu, dhaniya, curry leaves, tomatoes in dal - small but useful.

## ***2) Magnesium foods (calms cortisol + reduces puffiness)***

- **Seeds:** Pumpkin seeds / sunflower seeds (1 tbsp).
- **Nuts:** Almonds / cashews / peanuts (small handful; avoid salted).
- **Leafy greens + legumes:** Dals, chana, rajma, palak.
- **Dark cocoa:** Unsweetened or 85% (small piece).
- **Indian option:** Til (sesame) chutney or til laddoo without excess sugar (occasionally).

## ***3) High-protein whole foods (low protein can worsen swelling)***

Aim protein in every meal:

- **Eggs:** Boiled/omelet/bhurji (2-4 based on goals).
- **Chicken/fish:** Grilled, curry with low salt, or soup.
- **Paneer/tofu:** Bhurji, tikka, or stir-fry (avoid salty marinades).
- **Dahi/Greek yogurt:** Plain; add cucumber + jeera for raita.
- **Dal + dahi combo:** Excellent for gut and electrolytes.
- **Sattu:** Unsweetened sattu drink (sattu + lemon + jeera; very little black salt).

#### **4) High-fiber foods (constipation = more bloating/water hold)**

- **Fruits:** Papaya, guava, orange, berries (portion).
- **Veggies:** Lauki, tori, bhindi, cabbage (if it suits you), carrots, cucumber.
- **Whole grains:** Daliya, millets (bajra/jowar/ragi), brown rice - portion-controlled.
- **Digestion helpers:** Isabgol 1 tsp at night (only if constipated) with water.

#### **5) Natural diuretic foods and herbs (gentle and safe)**

- Cucumber and watermelon (portion) for hydration.
- Lemon water (morning or between meals).
- Amla (fresh or diluted juice; avoid sugary amla candies).
- Ginger (in tea or cooking).
- Jeera water / saunf water / ajwain water (choose one).
- Hibiscus tea (1-2 cups/day).
- Peppermint tea (good for bloating).
- Fresh coriander/parsley in meals.

#### **HIBISCUS AND SAFETY**

Herbal tea note: If you have low blood pressure, dizziness, are on BP medicines/diuretics, pregnant, or have kidney disease, keep hibiscus to 1 cup/day and monitor. When in doubt, check with your clinician.

# ***Foods to LIMIT (biggest culprits) + Smart swaps***

## ***1) High sodium 'hidden salt' foods***

- Packaged snacks: namkeen, chips, bhujia, crackers.
- Instant foods: soups/noodles/ready mixes.
- Pickles, papad, chutneys: keep minimal (they are salt bombs).
- Sauces: soy, ketchup, mayo, salad dressings.
- Cheese spreads and processed meats: very salty.
- Restaurant gravies: high sodium + hidden sugar + oils.

## ***Smart swaps:***

- Craving crunchy? Choose roasted makhana or unsalted chana (home-roasted).
- Want flavor? Use lemon, dhaniya, ginger, garlic, jeera, kali mirch instead of extra salt.
- Want sauce? Make a quick dahi + pudina dip with minimal salt.

## ***2) High sugar + refined carbs (pull water + inflammation)***

- Mithai, pastries, biscuits, desserts.
- White bread/pav, pizza, burgers, refined maida items.
- Cold drinks, sweet juices, sweetened lassi.

### ***Smart swaps:***

- Choose fruit + dahi as dessert most days.
- If craving sweet: small portion after a protein meal, not on an empty stomach.

## ***3) Alcohol (major trigger)***

- Even 1-2 drinks can cause dehydration rebound, poor sleep, and inflammation - all increasing water retention.

## ***4) 'Healthy' but bloaty for some people***

- Excess whey + lactose if sensitive (try curd/Greek yogurt or lactose-free options).
- Too much gassy veg at once (rajma/chole + cabbage + onion same meal).
- Very high sugar-free gums/sweets (some sweeteners cause bloating).

# ***Drinks and timing (daily routine)***

## **Hydration rules**

- 2-3 L water/day (more if you sweat).
- Spread through the day; do not chug 1 L at night.
- Aim for pale yellow urine most of the day.

## **Best drinks**

- Water + lemon.
- Chaas with roasted jeera.
- Coconut water (not multiple liters).
- Herbal: peppermint, ginger, hibiscus (1-2 cups).
- Optional: warm water with a slice of ginger after heavy meals.

## **Avoid / reduce**

- Too much tea/coffee late day (sleep loss -> water hold).
- Diet sodas can bloat some people.
- Very salty electrolytes unless you are sweating heavily (sports).

### **HYDRATION TIMING**

Simple timing tip: Front-load fluids. Example: 40% by lunch, 40% by 6 pm, 20% later. This reduces night-time urination and improves sleep.

# *Lifestyle changes that make the biggest difference*

## **1) Sleep (most underrated)**

- Sleep 7-8 hours.
- Stop screens 45 minutes before bed; dim lights.
- Late-night scrolling + short sleep increases cortisol and salt cravings.

## **2) Move every day (lymph + circulation)**

- 8,000-10,000 steps/day.
- If you sit long: every 45-60 min stand 2 min and walk.
- After meals: 10 min light walk (best anti-bloat habit).

## **3) Legs swelling protocol (daily)**

- Elevate legs 10-15 min (above heart level).
- Ankle pumps 50 reps (morning and evening).
- Compression socks for long travel/sitting.
- Avoid sitting with legs hanging for hours; use a footrest if needed.



## **4) Workout smart**

- New workouts can increase water retention temporarily due to muscle repair (normal).
- Add light walking + stretching on rest days.
- Do not panic if weight increases after heavy leg day - it is water, not fat.

## **5) Stress control (cortisol)**

- 10 minutes daily: breathing, meditation, prayer, journaling.
- Try 4-7-8 breathing (4 sec inhale, 7 sec hold, 8 sec exhale) for 4 rounds.
- A 10-minute evening walk also reduces cortisol.

## **6) Track sodium + consistency (3-day rule)**

- For 3 days: no packaged food + no restaurant; keep meals simple.
- Use lemon, herbs, and spices for taste instead of extra salt.
- If you eat out: choose tandoori/grilled + salad; ask for low salt when possible.



# 3-Day Auto-Reduce Reset

## **(Easy Indian plan)**

Use this when you feel puffy or after a salty weekend, travel, or poor sleep. This plan is not a detox - it is electrolyte balance + simple routines.

## **Daily structure (same for all 3 days)**

- Morning: warm water + lemon + 5-10 min walk.
- Mid-morning: coconut water OR chaas.
- Lunch: protein + dal/veg + salad; minimal salt; no pickle/papad.
- Evening: hibiscus or peppermint tea + nuts/seeds.
- Dinner: protein + light veg (lauki/tori/bhindi) + salad.
- Before bed: 10 min slow walk; legs up 10 min if ankle swelling.

## **Meal options (mix and match)**

MEAL	OPTIONS (CHOOSE ONE)
<b>Breakfast</b>	Moong dal chilla + dahi OR 2-3 eggs + cucumber OR paneer bhurji + salad OR curd bowl + fruit + seeds
<b>Lunch</b>	Dal + lauki/tori/bhindi + salad + 1-2 roti OR chicken/fish curry (low salt) + sabzi + small rice OR rajma/chole + salad (home-cooked)
<b>Snack</b>	Chaas OR coconut water OR fruit (guava/orange/papaya) + handful nuts
<b>Dinner</b>	Paneer/tofu/chicken/fish + light veg + salad OR soup (homemade) + protein

# *Simple 1-day 'anti-retention' template (quick reference)*

- **Morning:**

Warm water + lemon + 5 min walk.

- **Breakfast:**

Curd bowl + fruit OR 2 eggs/paneer bhurji + salad.

- **Mid:**

Coconut water / chaas.

- **Lunch:**

Dal/chicken + sabzi + salad + small rice/roti.

- **Evening:**

Ginger/hibiscus/peppermint tea + handful nuts.

- **Dinner:**

Paneer/tofu/chicken + lauki/tori/bhindi + salad.

- **Before bed:**

Short walk 10 minutes.

# Troubleshooting

## (Common questions)

- "I drank more water and weight increased" - If sodium was high, the body may hold water for 24-48 hours. Keep sodium low and keep moving; it will flush.
- "I started gym and I look puffy" - Normal muscle inflammation. Keep protein, sleep, and steps consistent.
- "I had a high-carb meal" - Glycogen binds water. Expect temporary increase; do not crash diet. Return to routine.
- "Travel makes my ankles swell" - Hydrate, walk every hour, ankle pumps, compression socks, and reduce salty foods before and during travel.
- "My face is puffy in the morning" - Reduce late salt, stop alcohol, finish dinner 3 hours before bed, sleep 7-8 hours.
- "Constipation + bloating" - Add fiber (veg, papaya), water, walking; consider isabgol at night for a few days.

### **SAFETY NOTE**

Do not take potassium tablets unless prescribed. Get potassium from food. If you have kidney disease, heart failure, or are on certain BP medicines, ask your doctor before increasing potassium or herbal teas.

## ***Very important warning***



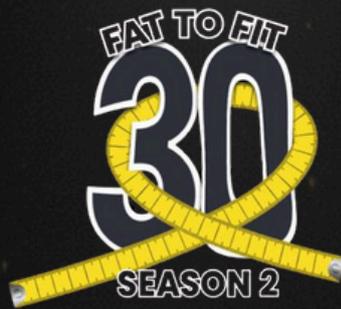
If swelling is one-sided, sudden, painful, or you have breathlessness, chest pain, or persistent pitting edema, do not self-treat only. These can indicate blood clots, heart, kidney, liver, thyroid, or circulation issues that need medical evaluation.

### ***Consider medical evaluation if:***

- Swelling lasts more than 1-2 weeks despite lifestyle changes.
- You wake up breathless, or swelling comes with fatigue and reduced exercise tolerance.
- Foamy urine, very low urine output, or high blood pressure.
- Swelling is associated with new medication changes.

### **Personalization checklist**

Want a personalized 3-day plan? Track: (1) where you retain water (face/belly/legs), (2) one side or both, (3) duration, and (4) your salt/restaurant frequency + sleep. Then tailor the plan around your pattern.



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