

Hydration, Electrolytes, and the Science of Molecular Hydrogen

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Molecular hydrogen is a lesser-known antioxidant studied by experts like Tyler LeBaron, Ph.D. Research shows it has different benefits that can support your overall health
- › LeBaron discusses the importance of proper hydration, which depends on electrolyte balance, not just water intake. Sodium, potassium, and calcium regulate nerves, muscles, and fluid balance, and prevent water intoxication
- › Molecular hydrogen works by supporting your body's natural balance systems, not blocking stress entirely
- › Many studies have reported benefits related to inflammation markers, recovery, and overall function, though results vary by delivery method, dose, and population. More research is ongoing
- › Effective hydrogen use requires correct timing and dosing, such as pulsing intake of hydrogen-rich water, avoiding overuse, and combining supplementation with healthy habits

Note: Editorial content reflects the author's perspective and is not intended as product promotion or medical advice.

Molecular hydrogen may be one of the greatest antioxidants that **most people have not heard about**. In previous articles, I've discussed research showing that it helps **strengthen endogenous antioxidant production**. One of the leading figures in the field of

this research is Tyler LeBaron, Ph.D. To raise awareness of it further, he appeared in the Built for Growth podcast by Miesha Tate, a mixed-martial artist.

Together, they discussed the importance of hydration for children and adults, and the role of molecular hydrogen. As noted by LeBaron, it's important to understand its basics before jumping into conclusions so that you don't misconstrue the findings. I recommend you watch the video in its entirety.¹

Why Water Alone Isn't the Whole Story

LeBaron and Tate start their discussion with the importance of hydration, especially under stressful conditions like intense training or weight-cutting to meet competition regulations. They cleared up common mistakes around drinking water and highlights why hydration is not only about how much you drink, but how your body manages what you take in.

- **Electrolytes play a central role in how your body functions during movement and exertion** — Minerals like sodium, potassium, and calcium help your nerves send signals and your muscles contract properly. Without the right balance, those signals weaken or fail. LeBaron emphasizes that your body works constantly to keep fluids balanced, which allows your systems to run smoothly instead of spiraling into stress or shutdown.
- **How tightly your body controls sodium levels** — Your kidneys are always adjusting, either releasing extra sodium or holding onto sodium to keep levels steady. Some people release sodium easily, while others are more sensitive and hold onto it, which can affect how your body responds to salt intake. This difference explains why one person handles salt well while another feels "off" quickly.
- **Don't overhydrate** — Drinking large amounts of plain or distilled water while cutting salt can dangerously lower sodium levels in your blood, a condition that can cause seizure or even death. In fact, LeBaron explains that water intoxication is more dangerous in the short term than dehydration.

During rehydration, drinking plain water too fast forces your body to defend itself, sometimes by flushing fluids out through diarrhea to prevent harm. Proper rehydration works when water, minerals, and simple sugars move together into your cells, restoring balance instead of overwhelming your system.

- **Even mild dehydration affects both your body and your brain** – Losing as little as 1% of your body's water reduces physical strength and mental sharpness. Many adults walk around slightly dehydrated without realizing it, which manifests as fatigue, slower thinking, headaches, and reduced focus.
- **Tips to help children rehydrate** – Dr. LeBaron explains that kids participating in sports need to be reminded to drink water, instead of being pressured. Aggressively forcing them to hydrate creates problems instead of solving them.

Short games or practices do not require sugary sports drinks or heavy electrolyte mixes. Plain water works when intake is spread out naturally. The key is balance, not volume, especially when kids are active, distracted, and having fun.

- **Proper hydration in older adults is essential for overall health** – Thirst signals weaken with age, meaning you often feel thirsty only after dehydration is already advanced. Kidney function also declines, which changes how the body handles fluids and sodium.

For older adults, a slightly higher salt intake may increase thirst and support healthy circulation. However, individual responses to salt vary, so monitoring how your body reacts is essential. Proper hydration supports circulation, brain function, and overall stability as you age.

Hydrogen Is the Smallest Molecule, but Plays a Big Role

Before going deep into molecular hydrogen, it's important to get a working idea behind it. LeBaron makes it clear that this topic sounds complicated only because it is unfamiliar, not because it is hard to understand.

- **Basics of molecular hydrogen** – It is made of two hydrogen atoms joined together, often written as H₂. LeBaron explains that hydrogen is not new to your body. It already exists naturally and is involved in basic energy processes. What makes molecular hydrogen different is how it is used intentionally.
- **How to use molecular hydrogen** – There are two main methods – breathing it in as a gas or drinking it after it has been added to water.

Hydrogen-rich water is the most common option because it is simple and easily fits into daily routines. When hydrogen dissolves in water, it stays there briefly before escaping into the air. The water needs to be consumed right after it is prepared to deliver the hydrogen effectively.

- **Why hydrogen behaves differently than other gases** – It is far lighter and smaller than oxygen or carbon dioxide. Because of its size, it spreads quickly through the body instead of lingering in one place. It does not build up or stay trapped – it moves fast, does its job, and leaves.

Balance, Not Erasure, Drives Better Health

Molecular hydrogen benefits your body at a basic level, especially when it comes to oxidation. Rather than framing oxidation as something to eliminate, LeBaron discusses why your body needs it in controlled amounts and what happens when that balance is disturbed.

- **A simple definition of oxidation** – LeBaron compares oxidation to how a sliced apple turns brown or how metal rusts over time. Inside your body, similar reactions happen constantly. Some of these reactions are helpful and even necessary.

Others become harmful when they happen too often or too intensely. Your body already has built-in defense systems, like glutathione, that keep these reactions under control without shutting them down completely.

- **Addressing a common misunderstanding around antioxidants** – Taking large doses of antioxidant supplements does not always help and has sometimes caused harm in studies. For example, LeBaron points to research where high doses of beta-carotene and vitamin E increased health risks instead of reducing them. He also explains that heavy antioxidant use after workouts actually interferes with training gains, because the stress from exercise is part of how your body adapts and gets stronger.
- **Molecular hydrogen works differently** – Instead of blocking all stress signals, molecular hydrogen helps your body stay balanced. As explained by LeBaron, some stress signals act like messengers, telling your cells to repair, protect, and strengthen themselves.

LeBaron explains that molecular hydrogen may support this process by helping your body activate its own defense systems rather than replacing them. The result is control instead of shutdown, allowing your body to respond intelligently instead of being pushed in too far one direction.

Healing Requires the Right Kind of Stress

Inflammation is often maligned because of its damaging effects on your health.

However, this is only the case when it becomes chronic. In fact, short-term inflammation plays an important role in recovery and long-term health.

- **Inflammation has two very different faces** – Short-term inflammation shows up after hard training, injury, or illness, and it plays a key role in repair. It brings nutrients, immune cells, and signals that tell your body to rebuild tissue stronger than before. Chronic inflammation is different. It stays active without a clear reason and slowly wears the body down. LeBaron emphasizes that recovery depends on allowing the first type while preventing the second from becoming constant.

- **Molecular hydrogen as an inflammation modulator** — Research suggests molecular hydrogen may help modulate inflammation pathways. The clinical significance of these effects for everyday users is still being studied.

What the Science Shows

LeBaron explains what the research says about molecular hydrogen and the strength of the findings nowadays. Many studies have reported benefits related to inflammation markers, recovery, and overall function, though results vary by delivery method, dose, and population. More research is ongoing.

LeBaron also points out that many of these studies use strong designs, including double-blind and placebo-controlled trials, which means neither the researchers nor participants knew who received hydrogen during the study.

The Importance of Understanding the Science

LeBaron shifts the focus from supplements and studies to education itself. He states that much of the confusion around health topics comes from a lack of basic scientific understanding, not from bad intentions. His work now centers on teaching people how to think clearly about the science, so they are less likely to be misled by bold claims and dubious advertising.

- **Understand the fundamentals first** — LeBaron talks about the courses he teaches and the materials he creates, which start at the very beginning. He does not assume you already understand chemistry or biology. Instead, he starts with simple ideas like atoms and molecules and builds up slowly.

The goal is to help you understand what the terminology means before deciding whether a claim makes sense. When you understand the basics, health information becomes less confusing and far less intimidating.

- **Knowledge is power** — An important part of LeBaron and Tate's conversation focuses on how research is often misunderstood. LeBaron explains the difference between two things happening at the same time and one thing causing the other. He also stresses the importance of control groups and explains how bias creeps in when studies are poorly designed.

Without these basics, headlines sound convincing even when the science behind them is weak or incomplete. Learning how studies work protects you from believing claims that sound exciting but fall apart under closer inspection.

- **A clear message about responsibility** — LeBaron explains that his goal is not to sell products or tell you what to take. Instead, he wants you to ask better questions and demand better evidence.

When you understand the basics, you stop relying on trust alone and start relying on logic. This approach puts the power back in your hands, helping you make informed health decisions instead of reacting to fear, hype, or social media trends.

Using Molecular Hydrogen the Right Way

LeBaron explains how hydrogen supplements are used in everyday settings. Again, his goal is to help people understand what works, what does not, and why proper timing and handling matter to make the most out of molecular hydrogen.

- **Drink hydrogen water right away** — One popular form of molecular hydrogen comes as tablets that react when dropped into water. Once it hits the water, hydrogen gas is released, which briefly becomes trapped in the liquid. This creates a cloudy look, which signals that the hydrogen is still present. Now, it's important to remember that hydrogen escapes quickly. If you wait too long, the gas leaves the water and the benefit drops sharply.

- **Caution against drinking the remaining tablet** — LeBaron stresses that swallowing the remaining tablet directly is unsafe. The chemical reaction produces heat and taking it dry risks burning tissue inside your body. He explains that tablets are designed to react in water, not in your mouth or stomach.
- **Clearing up confusion about breathing in the gas that escapes from the glass** — LeBaron explains that this strategy offers little value. The amount is small, uncontrolled, and gone in seconds. The benefit comes from drinking the water while the hydrogen is still dissolved, not from trying to capture what floats away.

Strategies to Help You Integrate Molecular Hydrogen Into Your Lifestyle

Adding hydrogen into your health routine can offer many valuable benefits. [In my own interview with LeBaron](#), we discussed practical steps that can help you take advantage of this radical molecule:

1. **Consider daily supplementation** — Not everyone will need it, but the lack of side effects make hydrogen a low-risk, high-reward strategy.
2. **Choose the right delivery method** — An advantage of hydrogen-rich water, especially from tablets, is its convenience.
3. **Don't let hydrogen escape** — Molecular hydrogen needs to be consumed right away to create the maximum amount of benefit.
4. **Embrace other healthy habits** — Don't rely on molecular hydrogen alone to support your health. Its effectiveness increases when you combine it with a healthy diet, regular exercise, and other positive lifestyle changes.
5. **Stay informed** — More studies continue to be published about molecular hydrogen. Staying updated in this field will help you optimize and tune your regimen better than before.

Molecular Hydrogen Works Best in Pulsed Doses

After learning the numerous benefits of molecular hydrogen, you might be tempted to constantly do it to the point of going overboard. However, when it comes to dosing, less is more. In my discussion with him, molecular hydrogen therapy works better when pulsed. These strategies will help you use molecular hydrogen properly:

- Drinking hydrogen-rich water at specific times during the day is more effective than sipping it constantly.
- Short sessions (one hour to three hours) of hydrogen inhalation may be preferable to longer (more than 20 hours), continuous exposure.
- Allowing at least some hours without hydrogen supplementation will enhance your body's response when it's reintroduced.

One issue in molecular hydrogen therapy is measuring the concentration of the actual hydrogen itself in water or gas. LeBaron employs gas chromatography to compute the figures during his research. In your case, it means you need to be cautious about product claims.

It would be wise to verify the words printed in the packaging material by cross-referencing methods employed in clinical trials. That way, you'll be able to figure out if a particular product really lives up to its promise.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Hydration and Molecular Hydrogen

Q: What is molecular hydrogen, and why are people talking about it?

A: Molecular hydrogen is a molecule made of two hydrogen atoms. Research shows it supports your body's natural antioxidant defenses and helps maintain balance

without shutting down normal biological processes.

Q: Why isn't drinking water alone always enough for proper hydration?

A: Hydration depends on balance, not just volume. Your body needs electrolytes like sodium and potassium to move water into cells, support nerves and muscles, and prevent dangerous dilution of blood sodium.

Q: How does molecular hydrogen work differently from typical antioxidants?

A: Instead of blocking all stress, molecular hydrogen helps your body regulate it. This allows helpful signals for repair and adaptation to continue while reducing excessive damage and chronic inflammation.

Q: What does research show about molecular hydrogen's benefits?

A: There is a growing body of human research on molecular hydrogen, with findings that vary by delivery method, dose, and study design. Studies using hydrogen-rich water tablets specifically are a subset of this literature.

Some preliminary studies have observed carry-over effects in certain markers after hydrogen use, though more research is needed to understand when, for whom, and under what delivery method this occurs.

Note: *Published studies on molecular hydrogen use a variety of delivery methods and doses. Results may differ from those of any specific supplement product. Study findings referenced in this article reflect the broader research literature and are not specific to any single product, dose, or delivery format.*

Q: What is the safest and most effective way to use molecular hydrogen?

A: Hydrogen works best when consumed immediately after preparation, in small, spaced doses. Hydrogen-rich water is convenient, but timing matters, and more is not better.

Sources and References

- ¹ [YouTube, Miesha Tate, November 29, 2024](#)