

Keeping Hydrated Information Leaflet

Provided by Bromley Healthcare

Many people do not drink enough water but it's a particular problem as we get older. Around 80% of water comes from drinks and 20% is contained in our food. Reduced appetite or poor nutrition can mean that many older people miss out on vital fluids.

Dehydration happens when your body loses more fluid than you are taking in. If this is not addressed, then dehydration can become a serious problem.

Practical hydration tips:



- Drink small amounts often
- Make sure that drinks are available at mealtimes and at least hourly during the day. Please ask the staff to help
- Let the staff know your drink preferences
- Make sure you can reach your drinks and that you have a suitable drinking vessel. Let the staff know if you need more help.
- If you worry about using the toilet at night you may need to drink more fluids earlier in the day.
- As you get older and when unwell you can lose your sense of thirst and taste. Find a way to remember to drink – phone alarms, vessels with hourly time written on them. Staff will help you to make sure you have enough drinks
- Monitor what you drink to make sure you are getting enough.

Did you know?

You should drink 2 litres of fluid a day to stay healthy and hydrated.

2 litres is the size of a large plastic fizzy drink bottle.

Hydration

Good hydration can assist in preventing or treating ailments such as:

- Pressure ulcers
- Constipation
- Urinary infections and incontinence
- Kidney stones
- Heart disease
- Low blood pressure
- Increased illness associated with chronic conditions such as diabetes
- Reduced mental ability
- Dizziness and confusion leading to falls
- Poor oral health
- Skin conditions

Dehydration

Thirst is the body's natural response to dehydration; however, this natural reminder can be lost as you get older. Many people need reminding to drink more, particularly when they are unwell and in hospital.

Incorporating foods with high water content in your diet such as soup, jelly or fruit can assist in reaching optimal hydration levels throughout the day in conjunction with fluids.

Using a checklist of how many drinks you have and how many times you go to the toilet will tell you, or your carers, if you are drinking enough. You may be asked to help monitor this on a chart.

Checking your urine is an easy way to assess your hydration status. Use the urine chart below to see if you are drinking enough or if you may need to drink more.

Hydration Chart

You could use a hydration monitoring chart to help yourself self-monitor your fluids in and out. If you need more accurate monitoring, you will be put on a fluid balance chart, and the care staff will complete this.

Dehydration can happen more easily if you have:

- Been in the sun too long
- Been taking medication such as diuretics or laxatives
- An illness such as diarrhoea or vomiting
- Sweated a lot i.e. during exercise
- Changes in your ability to do certain functions
- A high temperature
- Been recently unwell



What are the common signs of dehydration?

- Passing small amounts of dark coloured, concentrated urine
- Dry mouth and lips
- Urine that has a strong odour
- Less able to carry out physical tasks
- Headaches, dizziness or lightheaded
- Lack of concentration or confusion
- Skin that is less elastic
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite

Getting in touch

If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this leaflet, please contact the Bladder & Bowel Team on 0300 330 5777.