

# HYDRATION



## Think Drink!



Vale of York  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# DEHYDRATION

Fluid is required by the body for it to function. Our bodies constantly lose fluid through breathing, sweating or going to the toilet. Dehydration occurs when we take in less fluid than we lose.

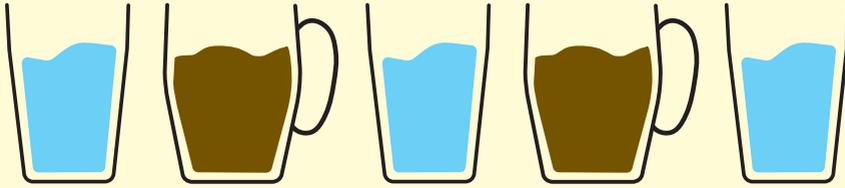
Older people are at a much greater risk of becoming dehydrated due to changes that occur in the body during the aging process. These changes can affect the way our kidneys function, the way our bodies manage and store water and alter our ability to recognise when we are thirsty. Additionally, our ability to access or consume fluid may become restricted due to physical difficulties such as:

- **Poor mobility or dexterity.**
- **Not wishing to drink to try to reduce the number of trips to the bathroom or for fear of incontinence.**
- **Cognitive impairment can result in a person being unable to recognise or understand the need to consume fluids or they may simply forget to drink.**
- **Communication difficulties may limit an individual expressing when they are thirsty or require assistance to drink.**
- **Other functional changes within the body can cause difficulties with swallowing (dysphagia).**

## The consequences of dehydration can be severe and include:

- **Urinary & Respiratory tract infections; possible contributor to blood stream infections from E-Coli bacteria associated with Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)**
- **Confusion, Delirium, Dizziness, Tiredness, Constipation, headache, Medication toxicity.**
- **Falls.**
- **Pressure Ulcers.**
- **Hospital admission.**

## How much fluid do we need?



It is recommended that adults drink at least 1500mls of fluid every day. This equates to approximately 6-8 mugs or glasses - all fluids count (except alcohol)... water, juice, tea, coffee, milk...

Aiming for optimal hydration - (achieving the best oral fluid intake possible) is the practical approach, with every little sip helping towards achieving adequate hydration.

Combine this with fluid rich foods such as soups, stews, sauces, milky puddings, jelly, ice cream or lollies and fresh fruit and veg.

### Top tips for improving Hydration

- **Identify those with poor fluid intake/at risk of dehydration or people that require help with drinking.**
- **Ensure sufficient drinking opportunities are available and provide support and encouragement at each, providing reassurance and adequate time.**
- **Provide water or juice with every meal and encourage increase fluid intake when taking medication.**
- **Explore individual drinking preferences and the type of drinking vessel preferred - if aids are required, normalise where possible.**
- **Ensure a wide range of drinks are readily available, served fresh and at the right temperature.**
- **Increase knowledge & understanding of the importance of adequate hydration.**
- **Increase availability of fluid rich foods.**

## Recognise the signs:

- Thirst, headache, a dry mouth, lips or dry cracked tongue.
- Tired, dizzy, lightheaded.
- Passing only small amounts of dark coloured, concentrated urine.
- Dry sunken eyes, fragile skin.
- Confusion or changes in behaviour.

## A Urine Colour Guide to Hydration

1	1 to 3 is a Healthy Pee  Pale, odourless urine is an indication that you are well hydrated
2	
3	
4	At number 4?... Drink some more...
5	By 5, 6, 7, 8 you really need to <b>RE-HYDRATE</b>  If blood is present in urine either red or dark brown, seek advice from your GP
6	
7	
8	

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For further details, please contact:  
**Helen Degnan, Senior Nurse, Quality Improvement**  
email: [h.degnan1@nhs.net](mailto:h.degnan1@nhs.net)

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