

# Healthy Hydration



Spotting the signs of dehydration and simple first steps ...

## **What is dehydration?**

Dehydration is when we don't drink enough fluids to maintain a healthy balance in our body.

Water makes up two thirds of our body. A healthy fluid balance is needed to help digestion, flush out waste and toxins and to keep the skin healthy.

Most people get dehydrated by not drinking enough fluids or by losing fluids and not replacing them.

## Who is at high risk?

You, or someone you care for, may be at risk of dehydration if you:

- Are dependent on others for the provision of, or access to fluids
- Have swallowing problems
- Have a raised temperature
- Have diarrhoea and/or vomiting
- Have taken part in physical activities
- Are in a very warm room or the weather is hot
- Are limiting your drinks because you have difficulty getting to the toilet on time
- Are limiting your drinks because you don't want to get up through the night to go to the toilet

## Spotting signs of dehydration

- Drinking less
- Feeling thirsty
- Headaches
- Tiredness
- Dry mouth / lips
- Confusion
- Small amounts of urine
- Urine is dark, cloudy or smelly
- Painful to pee
- Constipation

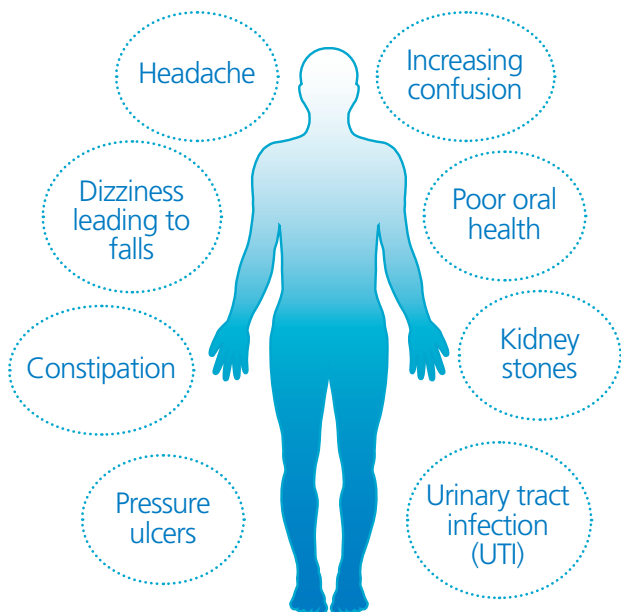


## What should you drink?

- Aim to drink at least 6 – 8 cups or mugs per day
- Any fluids eg milk, water, tea\*, coffee\*, fruit juice, except alcohol
- Also eat foods that contain fluids such as jelly, ice-lollies, yoghurt, soup, fruit such as melons
- Drink regularly through the day

\*Tea, coffee and some fizzy drinks contain caffeine which, if taken in large quantities, can contribute to dehydration. Try alternatives such as decaffeinated tea and coffee.

## Dehydration can lead to:



## Urine Colour Chart

**Healthy  
pee**



1

2

3

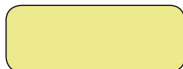
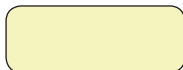
4

5

6

7

8



**Drink  
more**



## What else can you do to help?

- Empty bladder regularly throughout the day
- Get up and move about frequently to stimulate the urge to go
- Eat a well-balanced diet to prevent constipation
- Reduce your caffeine intake
- Ask for regular medication reviews



## What to do if you are concerned about someone else?

You can help prevent dehydration by:

- Being aware of the early warning signs
- Sitting down and having a drink or cup of tea together
- Planning visits around mealtimes to understand if there are any difficulties with drinking
- Having a look in the fridge or cupboards to check there are enough things to drink
- Encouraging attendance at local cafes/ local lunches / visiting voluntary, community or faith organisations with luncheon clubs
- Ensuring both hot and cold drinks are safely and freely accessible
- Encouraging around 6-8 drinks per day



- Be aware that other food such as jelly, soup, yoghurt, milk puddings, ice-lollies, and some fruits also contain fluid
- Supporting access to both social and health services



## Who can help?

- Worried about getting to the toilet on time?
- Issues with a catheter or continence items?
- Having difficulty using utensils or the kettle?
- Having difficulty chewing or swallowing?

Your GP or community nurse can provide you with advice or information about preventing dehydration or can provide information on other services which might be able to help.



Produced by:



**Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees  
Clinical Commissioning Group  
South Tees Clinical Commissioning Group  
South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust**

