

Fluids

Contact dietitian: Telephone no:

Drinking enough every day is vital for wellbeing.

If you don't drink enough over a period of time you are likely to become dehydrated. This affects mental and physical wellbeing and can lead to a higher risk of constipation and can affect mood and concentration. It can also worsen confusion and cause headaches.

There are many reasons why some people may not drink enough. Certain conditions may cause some people to not recognise when they are thirsty, have difficulties swallowing fluids or just forget to drink. Some people also fear incontinence.

A rough guide is to try to drink at least eight cups of fluid a day. This could include water, squash, fruit juice, tea, coffee, milk and other soft drinks.

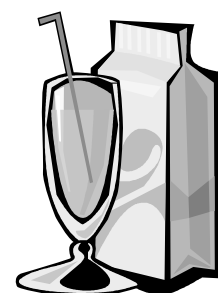


Ideas to help somebody increase their fluid intake

- Gentle reminders and prompts may help people to drink enough.
- Offer frequent cups of drink throughout the day.
- Provide assistance with drinking as needed – give the cup to the person to encourage them to drink rather than just leaving it on the table.
- Ensure that the cup is easy to hold and to drink from.



- A two-handed beaker with or without a spouted lid is an option for people who struggle to grip a cup or glass and are prone to spilling drink.
- Use a clear cup or glass to allow the person to see what is inside, or use a brightly coloured cup for clear fluids.
- It is often better to transfer drinks that are supplied in a carton to a cup, rather than expecting them to be sucked up through a straw.
- Encourage people to have a small drink before a meal as well as afterwards. This can help to cleanse and refresh the palate before eating.
- Offer a variety of both hot and cold drinks.
- If you are unable to make someone a drink every 1–2 hours, use a bottle or flask that can be kept beside them.
- Add sauces, gravies or custard to foods.
- Encourage people to eat fluid-containing foods such as ice cream, jelly, soup, milk puddings or fruit and vegetables.
- If someone doesn't have much of an appetite, they can get extra calories from nourishing drinks such as hot milky drinks, milk shakes, fruit juice or smoothies.



A quick way of checking if a person is likely to be drinking enough is to check the colour of their urine. It should be plentiful, pale and fairly odourless. If it is dark and concentrated it is possible that they are not getting enough fluids.