

Reducing Your Fluid Intake

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Leaflet provided by:

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Why Is Fluid Balance In Our Bodies Important?

Our kidneys act as filters to help the body get rid of excess fluid by the production of urine. If our kidneys are not working properly, we may not pass much urine, causing a build up of fluid in the body. This is called fluid overload or oedema.

When fluid builds up in the body, it can cause the following problems:

- Swelling, particularly of ankles, feet and face (oedema)
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- High blood pressure
- An extra strain on the heart
- Collections of fluid around the lungs, which can cause chest infections/pneumonia

If you notice any of the above symptoms please tell your Doctor/Nurse.

Your Doctor may prescribe medication called a diuretic which can help you pass more urine. You may also be asked to drink less fluid. This is called a daily 'fluid allowance' or 'fluid restriction'.

Your fluid allowance or 'fluid restriction' depends on your urine output, medications and level of kidney function and it may change depending on these factors. You may be asked to do a 24 hour urine collection to determine how much urine you pass.

Salt can cause thirst and lead to water retention in the body, so reducing your salt intake can help with keeping to your fluid restriction. Your Dietitian can provide you with information on

reducing your salt intake and provide you with a 'Reduced Salt' diet sheet if you would like more information.

If in hospital, you may be weighed daily to see how much of your weight is excess fluid. This can influence the amount that you can drink during the day. Your Doctor, Nurse or Dietitian can advise you on this.

Fluid intake includes drinks **and** foods. Foods which contain a lot of fluid would need to be counted in your fluid allowance include:

Gravy/sauces	Soups
Ice cream	Jelly
Custards	Yoghurts
Milk on cereal	

The next page shows examples of how much fluid these foods can contain.

Useful Fluid Measures

A mug	=	300mls
A glass	=	200mls
A average cup	=	200mls
A plastic cup	=	150mls
A hospital tumbler	=	200mls
A pint	=	600mls
½ pint	=	300mls
A can of fizzy drink	=	330mls
A measure of spirit	=	25-35mls
An ice cube	=	20mls
A tablespoon	=	15mls
A dessert spoon	=	10mls
A teaspoon	=	10mls
A bowl soup	=	200mls
A scoop ice cream	=	50mls
Bowl of milky pudding/yoghurt	=	100mls
Milk on cereal	=	100mls
Average soup portion	=	200mls

Useful Conversions

1 Litre	=	1000ml (approx 1 ½ pints)
¼ pint	=	150ml
1 pint	=	600ml approx

Your fluid allowance is:

Date	Daily fluid allowance (ml)

Tips to help you keep to your daily fluid allowance

- Use small teacups or half cups, not mugs
- Take small sips rather than big gulps
- Save drinks for in-between meals
- Gargling or rinse mouth with ice cold water or mouth wash
- Try sucking small ice cubes – add squash or freeze fizzy drinks as a refreshing alternative
- Stimulate saliva production by sucking a small lemon orange/grapefruit wedge fresh or frozen
- Try boiled sweets, mints or chewing gum (*if you have diabetes, you may want to choose sugar-free sweets/gum*)
- Try and spread your fluid allowance throughout the day
- Do not add salt to your food during cooking or at the table
- Avoid/limit salty foods, e.g. bacon, crisps, salted nuts, processed foods and highly spiced foods
- Don't forget to include fluid rich foods in your allowance, e.g. gravy, soup, ice cream, custard, milk puddings, jelly, sauces, yoghurts
- If you drink alcohol, try to have low volume drinks like spirits with a splash of mixer or on ice instead of pints
- Do not let anyone "top up" your drink
- For social events plan ahead and save some of your fluid allowance to have while out
- Try to drink only when thirsty rather than out of habit or to be sociable
- Remember, alcohol can make you thirstier.

Something to try:

Keep a measuring jug in your kitchen. Start each day with the jug empty. For every drink or measure of fluid you have, add the same amount of water to the jug. You will then be able to see your total intake of fluid as the day goes on.

Alcohol

Your Doctor will be able to advise you if it is safe for you to drink alcohol. It is important that you do not exceed Government Guidelines on alcohol intake.

It is recommended that men and woman do not drink more than 14 units a week, and to spread this out evenly throughout the week. If you wish to cut down the amount you drink, a good way to help achieve this is to have several drink-free days each week.

Alcohol will also contribute to your fluid allowance and if you are on a renal diet, some may need to be avoided due to their potassium or phosphate content. Your Dietitian can discuss this with you.

Diabetes

If you have diabetes, high blood sugar levels can cause extreme thirst, which can lead to you drinking more fluids. This can make fluid overload worse. If your blood sugars are running high, please seek advice from your GP, Nurse, Diabetes Nurse or if you are under a Diabetes Centre seek advice.

Renal Diet

Depending on your level of kidney function and blood results, you may need to follow a special renal diet. Your Dietitian can discuss this with you.

Contact Details:

Dietitian Name: _____

Telephone Number: (0151) 529 3473

Useful websites:

www.kidneypatientguide.org.uk

www.drinkaware.co.uk



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

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