

## Staying hydrated

### Why is fluid important?

Fluid plays many major roles in the body. It removes waste products. It regulates the body's temperature and blood pressure. It transports nutrients and passes food along the digestive system. It can help prevent kidney stones and urinary infections.

We need to replace the fluid we lose when we breathe, sweat or pass urine.

**Please note:** If you are following a fluid restriction for medical reasons, then please speak to your doctor.

### What if I don't drink enough?

You could become dehydrated which would make you feel very unwell. You might need to be admitted to hospital.

Dehydration can cause:

- Urine infections
- Pressure sores
- Falls
- Confusion
- Constipation
- Drowsiness
- Kidney stones
- Poor appetite

### How can I tell if I'm not drinking enough?

- Dark urine (should be straw or pale yellow coloured) and not passing much
- Feel thirsty
- Feel tired, poor concentration
- Headaches, dizziness
- Frequent urine infections
- Dry, sticky mouth



### What do I need?

Women typically need to drink about 1.6 litres of fluid every day and men need about 2 litres. This is in addition to the fluid we get from our food.

You might need more if you have a temperature or have lost fluid through vomiting or diarrhoea, or if you are very active.

All drinks count – tea, coffee, water, milk, milky drinks, fruit juices, cordials and fizzy drinks. It is best to avoid too much alcohol as this can cause dehydration.

If you are not trying to lose weight, milky drinks are a good choice. Avoid “diet” and “no added sugar” options. See our leaflet “**Nourishing Drinks for adults**” for more ideas.

If you are trying to lose weight, keep sugary- fizzy drinks, fruit juices and cordials to a minimum. ‘Diet’ and ‘no added sugar’ drinks contain no or fewer calories.

## Why some people don't drink enough

There are many reasons. You might be worried about needing to get up in the night for the toilet, or having an accident. You might be dependent on other people to provide drinks for you or you might have difficulty communicating that you need a drink. If you need to have your fluids thickened you might find this less refreshing. You might just forget or not feel thirsty – our sense of thirst declines with age.

## Household measures in ml



150    330    500    200    250

## 2 litres in a day example

- Milk with cereal                      150 ml
- Breakfast fruit juice                150 ml
- Breakfast cup of tea                150 ml
- 3 mugs coffee  
  between meals                        750 ml
- 3 glasses of water                    600 ml
- Hot chocolate  
  for supper                              250 ml

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2,050 ml

## Tips for increasing fluid intake

- ✓ Aim to have at least 8 drinks a day. Keeping a re-usable bottle to hand to help keep you hydrated. Do not forget to refill.
- ✓ Keep a record of what you drink – or ask someone to do this for you.
- ✓ If you're worried about continence overnight, drink more fluids earlier in the day.
- ✓ Make the most of "wet foods" such as jellies, milky puddings, custards, ice cream, ice lollies, high water fruits, stews, casseroles, soups.
- ✓ If you are caring for someone, you may need to prompt, encourage or assist to drink.

For further information contact the person who gave you this leaflet or:

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics  
Airedale General Hospital  
Skipton Road  
Steeton  
BD20 6TD    Tel: 01535 294758/294857 (direct lines)

The Trust's Patient Information Service is here to help you to find out more about health condition, local support groups and healthy living

The Patient Information Service is at Airedale General Hospital  
Tel: 01535 294413    Email: [your.health@anhst.nhs.uk](mailto:your.health@anhst.nhs.uk)  
Web: [www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/YourHealth](http://www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/YourHealth)

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **01535 294019**

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