University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

Patient Information

Nutrition and Dietetics

Nutrition Team - A guide to fluid allowance

Your dietitian has asked you to drink only a certain amount of liquids every day, this is called a fluid allowance.

Your fluid allowance includes both your fluid allowance and the oral rehydration solution, as explained below:

- **You can drink up to _____ ml of regular drinks each day.**
- **You need to have _____ sachets of Dioralyte (oral rehydration solution) mixed with _____ ml of water every day.**
- **Or, you can have _____ml of St Mark's Solution per day, if you make it using the recipe your dietitian gave you.**

Why have you been given a fluid allowance?

If you've had part of your bowel removed, it can affect how your bowel works. This means your body won't absorb fluids and nutrients like it used to. It is important to drink the right amount of fluid and the right types of drinks. This helps your body stay healthy.

Fluid and high output stomas

If your body is not absorbing enough fluid, you might notice a lot of liquid coming from your stoma. This can make you dehydrated.

Even if you don't have a stoma, you might still need to follow a fluid restriction if you have had a large part of your colon removed.

Signs of dehydration

Signs that you might be dehydrated include:

- Increased thirst
- Dry mouth
- Feeling light-headed (dizzy), especially when you stand up
- Feeling tired
- Headaches
- Muscle cramps
- Passing urine less often
- Dark coloured or strong-smelling urine

What drinks are in your allowance?

You can drink the fluids you enjoy, but it is important to stick to your prescribed fluid allowance. Drinking more than your allowance will not help prevent dehydration, as they may cause you to lose even more fluid from your bowel. This will also affect your electrolyte (salt) balance and make you feel more thirsty.

Normal fluids include tea, coffee, fizzy drinks, juice, squash, milk, soup, sports drinks, Bovril, and water. Fluids that melt easily, such as ice cream and ice lollies, are also included. Prescribed oral nutrition supplements are also considered normal fluids.

Oral Rehydration Solution (e.g. Dioralyte)

You might be prescribed an oral rehydration solution such as Dioralyte, or other types like St Mark's Solution or O.R.S tablets. Oral rehydration solutions are a mix of sugar and salts that help your body absorb fluid. They are more effective than normal fluids at rehydrating you.

The amount of oral rehydration solution you can drink is separate from your fluid allowance. Your doctor or dietitian will tell you exactly how much you need. It is important to follow the instructions carefully. If you are still feeling thirsty, speak with the Nutrition team to see if the volume can be increased.

When you are in hospital, the staff will make this drink for you and ask you to drink it throughout the day.

If you don't like the taste, , you can:

- Drink it cold from the fridge (but do not add ice, as it will dilute the mix).
- Sip it through a straw.
- Add a small amount of highly concentrated squash to improve the taste. Flavours like lemon or lime may help mask the salty taste. If you add squash, be sure not to exceed your total fluid volume. You may need to add slightly less water to make up for the squash.

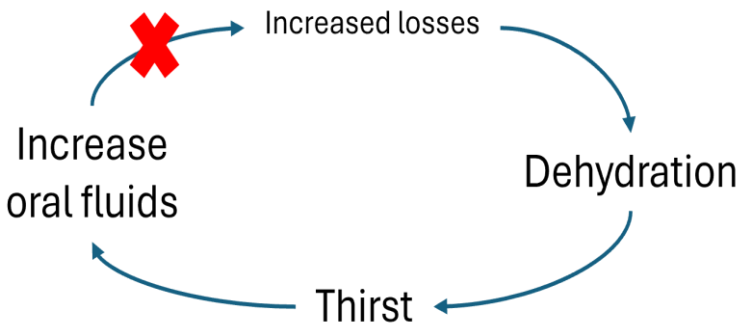
Tips for managing your fluid allowance:

Your dietitian will tell you how much fluid you can have each day. This amount may change over time, so it's important to check regularly. Make sure to track all drinks and foods with high fluid content. Remember to include any fluids used to take medicines.

Here are some tips to help you manage your fluid allowance:

- Sip drinks slowly throughout the day.
- Suck on ice cubes. These are usually between 10-30ml each, depending on size.
- Pour your daily fluid allowance into a jug at the start of the day so you can see how much you have left to drink.
- Use a smaller cup or only half-fill your normal cup each time you have a drink.
- If your mouth feels dry, chew gum or suck on boiled sweets to help produce saliva.

The Thirst Cycle



It is important to try to break the cycle of thirst. When you are dehydrated you will feel thirstier. This will make you want to drink more. If you drink more, your stoma or bowel losses will increase, making you lose even more fluid. This, in turn, will make you even more dehydrated and thirstier.

By sticking to your fluid allowance, you can help control your stoma or bowel losses. Your Oral Rehydration Solution will keep you hydrated. Use the tips above to make the fluid allowance more manageable.

If you notice that you are feeling increasingly thirsty, please contact the Nutrition Team for further advice.

Useful measures to help you track oral fluid intake:

1 average mug – 260ml	1 tablespoon – 15ml
1 average teacup – 150-200ml	1 dessert spoon – 10ml
1 average glass tumbler – 200ml	1 teaspoon – 5ml
1 canned drink – 330ml	1 pint – around 600ml
1 ice cube – 10-30ml	1 litre – 1000mls / around 1¾ pints
Yogurt/Custard/Ice-Cream – count half the volume as fluid	

It's helpful to measure the volume of the cups, mugs, and bowls you regularly use at home to monitor your fluid intake more accurately.

Fluid volumes in hospital water jug and cups

Jug of Water- 750ml

Beaker with lid- 200ml

Red Beaker- 200ml

Cup of Tea - 175ml

Drinking Glass- 250ml

More information

This leaflet was produced by Coventry Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the team using the number below.

Nutrition Team Dietitians contact number: 024 7696 7177

All the images have been produced at UHCW.

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