

# Keeping hydrated

**If you are following a fluid restriction for medical reasons then this leaflet is not for you.**

## What do we mean by hydration?

Water makes up over two thirds of the healthy human body. It is essential for lubricating the joints and eyes, aiding digestion, flushing out waste and toxins and keeping skin healthy.

Dehydration occurs when the normal water content of your body is reduced, upsetting the delicate balance of minerals (salts) and sugars in your body. Many of your body's cells depend on these minerals being maintained at the correct levels to function properly.

## What are the symptoms of dehydration?

Symptoms of dehydration include:

- dark urine
- feeling thirsty
- light-headedness
- dizziness
- headaches and tiredness
- reduced alertness
- reduced ability to concentrate

## Who is more at risk of dehydration?

Dehydration is generally caused by not drinking enough fluid or by losing fluid and not replacing it.

People who have lost fluid through vomiting and diarrhoea, through sweating (for example, if you have a fever or through exercising) or through drinking too much alcohol are more at risk of dehydration.

## How do you know if you are dehydrated?

A dry mouth may be the first sign that you are dehydrated. Also dizziness and headache may occur followed by the symptoms listed above.



### What can you do to prevent or treat dehydration?

You should aim to drink around 1.5 - 2 litres (around 6 - 8 glasses) of fluid per day to stay hydrated. Sometimes drinking little and often may be easier.

### Household measures in mls



All fluids count, except alcohol! Foods can also contribute to your daily fluid intake, for example melon, soups, stews, fruit and vegetables.

Do not wait until you feel thirsty to have a drink, thirst is often a late response to dehydration.

Finally, have a look at the colour chart below and see what your hydration status is. The colour of your urine (wee) can indicate dehydration:

1	Good	<b>1, 2, 3 = Healthy wee</b>
2	Good	
3	Fair	
4	Dehydrated	<b>Over 4 = Drink more</b>
5	Dehydrated	
6	Very dehydrated	
7	Severely dehydrated	

If you have any concerns, please contact your own GP or the Out of Hours Service on 111.

If you would like this information in another format, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net)

For general enquiries please ring: 0151 514 2888