

What to do if you are concerned about someone else:

You can help prevent dehydration by:

- being aware of the early warning signs
- sitting down and having a drink or cup of tea with them
- planning visits around mealtimes to get a sense of what they are drinking and if they have any difficulties drinking
- having a look in the fridge or cupboards to check they have enough things to drink
- encouraging them to attend local cafes / local lunches / visiting voluntary, community or faith organisations with luncheon clubs
- ensuring both hot and cold drinks are safely and freely accessible
- encouraging around eight drinks per day
- be aware that other food such as jelly, soup, yogurt, milk pudding, ice-lollies, and some fruits contain fluid.
- supporting access to both social and health services.

Who can help?

Your GP or community nurse can provide you with advice or information about preventing dehydration or can provide information on other services which might be able to help.

Other useful Contacts

SUTIN contact:

Email: nss.ScottishUTINetwork@nhs.net

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What is dehydration?

Water makes up two thirds of our body.

It is vital we drink enough fluid to maintain a healthy balance. Most people get dehydrated by not drinking enough fluids or by losing fluids and not replacing them.

Who is at high risk?

You may be at risk of dehydration if you:

- are dependent on others for provision of or access to fluids
- have swallowing problems
- have a raised temperature
- have diarrhoea and / or vomiting
- after you have taken part in physical activities
- are limiting your drinks because you have difficulty getting to the toilet on time
- are limiting your drinks because you don't want to get up through the night to go to the toilet.



Good hydration can assist in preventing or treating:

- urinary tract infections
- headaches
- constipation
- dizziness - this can lead to falls
- confusion
- kidney stones
- poor oral health
- pressure ulcers / skin conditions.

Spotting the signs and symptoms:

- drinking less than usual
- feeling thirsty (although not everyone feels thirsty)
- dark coloured or small amounts of urine
- headaches
- tiredness
- dry mouth, lips or eyes
- lack of concentration
- confusion
- constipation
- urinary tract infections.

What should you drink?

Aim for at least eight cups or mugs per day. Any fluid, except alcohol counts including milk, water, tea*, coffee* and fruit juice.

* Tea, coffee, energy drinks and some carbonated drinks contain caffeine which, if taken in large quantities can contribute to dehydration. You should try to alternate these types of drinks with a glass of water or juice.

The key is to drink regularly throughout the day.

What to do if you are concerned about yourself:

You can help prevent dehydration by:

- recognising the early warning signs
- don't wait until you are thirsty before having a drink
- make sure you have enough things available to drink throughout the day. Try to have a glass of water or juice handy at all times
- other foods such as ice cream, ice- lollies, jelly, soup, yogurt, milk puddings or water rich fruits such as melons can also count towards your fluid intake
- if you are having problems using utensils or the kettle, Occupational Therapy can help. Speak to your GP or nurse at the clinic as they will be able to advise you where to go for help
- if you are worried about getting to the toilet on time you should speak to your GP or nurse who can refer you to someone who can help.

This leaflet does not replace advice from medical or healthcare professionals.

