

Preventing Dehydration

What is Dehydration?

Dehydration is the loss of important fluids from the body. Salts and minerals, known as electrolytes, can also be lost with the fluids and need to be replaced quickly. Water is very important in preventing dehydration, but it does not have electrolytes. Speak to your healthcare team about which fluids are appropriate for you.

What Causes Dehydration?

Your body may lose too much fluid from:

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Excessive urination (such as with uncontrolled diabetes or water pills)
- Excessive sweating (for example, from exercise)
- Fever

You might not drink enough fluids because of:

- Nausea
- Loss of appetite due to illness
- Sore throat or mouth sores
- Taste changes

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration?

- Dry mouth or coated tongue
- Constipation (stools may be hard and small)
- Dry skin and lips
- Dark colored urine
- Frequent urination but only passing small amounts of urine
- Headache
- Change in your thinking (confusion)
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Fast heart rate
- Dry eyes

What Can I Do to Prevent Dehydration?

The best way to replace fluids is to drink. Drink small frequent amounts of fluid throughout the day rather than trying to drink large amounts of fluid at one time. Drinking too much fluid at once can cause vomiting.

- Drink until urine is light colored
- Use a large bottle and try to take sips throughout the day
- Leave a glass of fluid at your bedside
- Choose a variety of fluids based on what you like
- Have more fluids between mealtimes
- Have your friends and family remind and encourage you to drink

What should I drink?

Good choices of fluid are:

Food Groups	Suggested Foods	Foods to Avoid
Beverages	Fruit juices (apple, cranberry, grape) Sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade®) Electrolyte replacements (e.g., Pedialyte®, Ensure® Rapid Hydration) Soda (caffeine free cola, lemon-lime, ginger ale) Non-fruit juice (e.g., Kool-Aid®) Milk* Tea (caffeine free or herbal)	Alcohol Caffeine containing beverages
Soups	Bouillon, consommé, clear broth	
Sweets and Desserts	Gelatin (Flavored or Unflavored) Fruit ice made from fruit juice Frozen ice pops Sherbet Milkshakes	
Miscellaneous	Liquid nutritional supplements (e.g., Ensure® or Pediasure®)	

* if tolerated

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.