

Patient information

Fluid restriction guidance

Fluid restriction is needed if your body is holding water. This is called fluid retention (oedema or if localised to abdomen = ascites). A fluid restriction limits the amount of fluids you are allowed to consume from food and beverages. You may have been put onto fluid restriction due to having a certain condition, for example:

- Heart failure
- Kidney disease
- Liver disease
- Endocrine and adrenal gland disorders
- Conditions that cause the release of stress hormones
- Treatment with medications called corticosteroids
- Low levels of sodium in the blood (hyponatraemia)

If you go over your fluid allowance and / or your body retains fluid you may experience:

- Swelling of hands, ankles, and / or feet
- Increased size of the veins in your neck
- Weight gain
- Increased urination
- Limited activity tolerance / shortness of breath
- Decreased appetite / feeling full earlier than usual
- Increased blood pressure
- Rapid heartbeat
- Dizziness, weakness, fatigue, and / or confusion

These symptoms may be uncomfortable but they can also be dangerous. Please

contact your doctor if you notice any sudden change or progressive worsening of symptoms.

Fluid intake is individual so do not be guided by other patients

You should restrict your fluid to mls per day (your consultant will guide you).

It is important for you to count all drinks and any food that is liquid or which melts eg soups, sauces, gravy, custard, ice cream, milk on cereals, milk puddings, jelly, yoghurt. You should count these foods with high fluid content has half (1/2) fluid.

The following measures will help you to add up your daily fluid intake:

- 1 average mug – 300ml
- 1 average teacup – 200ml
- 1 average glass tumbler – 200ml
- 1 average plastic cup – 175ml
- 1 canned drink – 330ml
- 1 ice cube – 10 - 20ml

Useful conversions:

- 1 teaspoon – 5ml
- 1 tablespoon – 15ml
- 1 pint – approx 600ml
- 1 litre – 1000ml / approx 1¾ pints

Helpful hints:

- Use a small cup for drinks that holds no more than 150ml
- Experiment with a measuring jug to see how much liquids are
- Spread your fluid allowance throughout the day
- Take drinks between meals and not with meals
- Take drinks that quench your thirst. Very sweet or salty drinks will not help your thirst.
- Sip your drinks, do not gulp them! Try a straw with cold drinks to slow you down.
- Have a variety of different flavoured drinks

- Try to suck small ice cubes if you are thirsty (count each ice cube as 15mls) OR boiled sweets or lemon slices
- Eating mints or chewing gum can help to reduce thirst
- Salty and spicy foods can make you thirsty so try to avoid them
- Try rinsing your mouth with a mouthwash or ice-cold water but do not swallow it
- Take medications with very small sips of water, or try apple sauce or other soft foods.

For further information:

Please contact the West Suffolk Dietetics Department: 01284 713609

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