

Food First in Care Homes; Keeping Hydrated

Why is keeping hydrated important?

Good hydration helps prevent a large range of conditions including: dry mouth, dizziness, confusion, tiredness, constipation, kidney stones, pressure ulcers, low blood pressure (leading to increased risk of falls), and Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

How much fluid does an adult need daily?

The recommendation for adults above 60 years old is for 30ml/ kg body weight.

A 60 kg resident will therefore require 1.8 litres of fluid/day.

Heavier adults will require more e.g. 70 Kg adult need 2.1L or 2100ml/day.

Lighter adults will require less e.g. a 45 Kg adult will require 1.35 litres or 1350ml of fluid/day

What counts as a suitable fluid?

All drinks except alcohol. So water, soft drinks, tea and coffee, milk, fruit juice and squash all count. Some foods are also high in fluids and contribute to daily intake– see next page.



Typical sizes of drink containers:

Cup of tea/coffee : 200ml

Average sized lass of milk/ water/ juice: 200ml

Small glass= 150ml

Average sized paper cup: 240ml

Therefore to achieve 1.8L/day about 9 cups of drink (tea, water, juice. Milk) need to be drunk.

Common barriers to good hydration in care homes

- Forgetting to drink- thirst signals may diminish with age.
- Not wanting to drink too much to reduce need to pass urine and avoid accidents
- Fluids not being within reach / resident needing help to drink

How to achieve 1600ml-2000ml fluid daily

General tips:

- Do not wait for residents to feel thirsty. Offer fluids through out the day and on each contact with residents.
- Offer fluids in easy to handle containers e.g. plastic cups or beakers with handles may be easier then porcelain cups and saucers
- Ensure fluids are readily available and within reach of residents who are able to help themselves to drink
- Underweight residents should be encouraged to take higher calorie and protein drinks e.g.. Full cream milk, milky drinks such as Horlicks and fruit juices
- It can be helpful to monitor urine colour—if darker than straw colour

Fluid content of foods

Many foods are in fact made up of significant amounts of water and can therefore help boost daily fluid intake

Don't forget to count the fluid content of food when recording fluid intakes

See table below for some common high water content foods

Food	Water content
Yoghurt (125g)	95ml
Jelly (120g)	100ml
2 scoops ice cream	75ml
Tinned fruit cocktail (115g)	100ml
Milk on cereal	125ml
Stewed apple (85g)	75ml
2 tablespoons potato mash	70ml
Cauliflower cheese	70ml
4 broccoli florets	75ml
Scrambled eggs with milk	80ml
3 tablespoons baked beans	90ml
Small tin of soup (300g)	265ml
1 tomato (85g)	80ml